NANAE CHRONO
PEACE MAKER 鐵
3
KUROGANE

Graphic Novel/Manga
Action
USA $9.99
MPM/003

RATED
13+

Old friends, new enemies...

A dark cloud of uncertainty has settled over the ranks of the Shinsengumi, following the death of Yamanami. While waiting for the swift vengeance of an irate Suzu, Ito is preoccupied with the mystery surrounding Tetsunosuke's death, and works to find his killers. Old friends haunt and new enemies threaten the way of the Shinsengumi as the intrigue of this samurai saga turns deadly.

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病 銃 別 遭 泪

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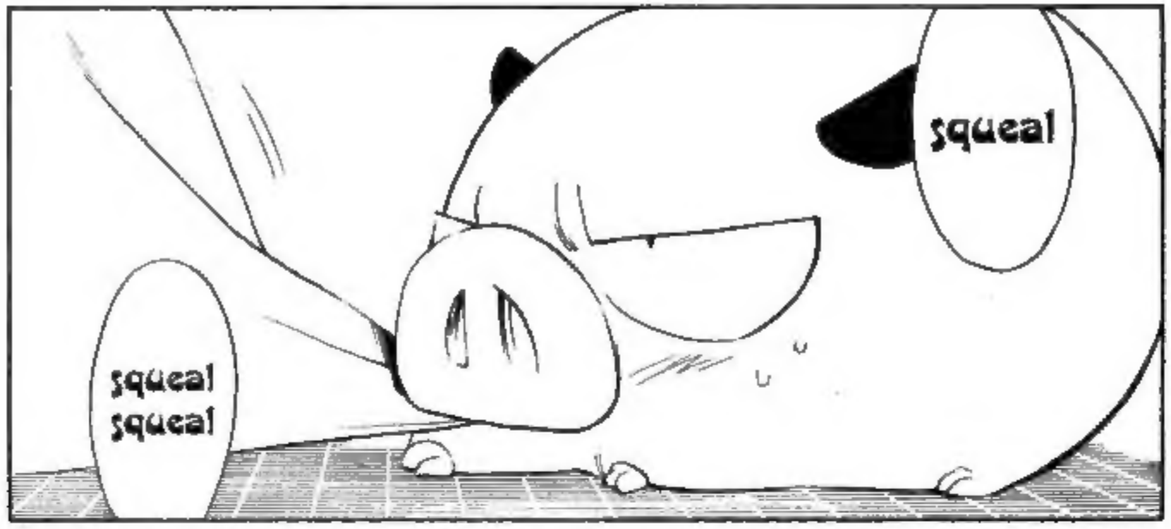
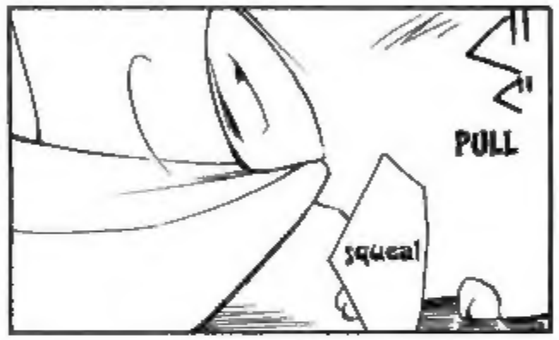
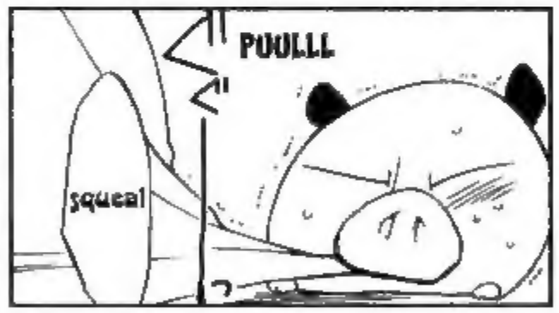
3
KUROGANE
PEACE MAKER. KUROGANE.







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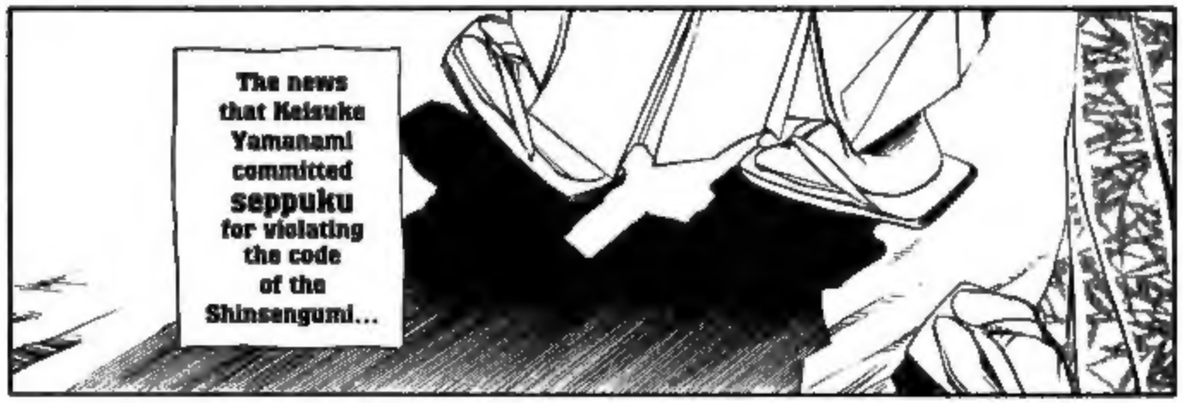
病銃別漕泪



CHAPTER 11

TEARS 涙

.....

.....

KONDO SAID...

IT WAS TRULY IMPRES-SIVE.

I JUST SAW HIM A LITTLE WHILE AGO...

BUT I JUST SAW HIM!

HEI-SUKE.

AREN'T YOU GOING TO SAY GOODBYE TO YAMANAMI?

.....

IF HE PERFORMED *SEPPUKU* WELL...

I WONDER...

IT'S LIKE THEY DIDN'T EVEN TAKE TIME TO **DELIBERATE** ABOUT IT.

I SAW HIM COME BACK TO THE QUARTERS JUST THAT AFTERNOON.

IT **DOES** SEEM A LITTLE ODD.

YES, SIR!

THERE'S SOMETHING I WANT YOU TO LOOK INTO.

AND IT WAS JUST ABOUT TO GET INTERESTING...

Damn

UT-SUMI, SHINO-HARA.

BWSH

FOOL.

HE DESERTED THE SHINSENGUMI, AND HAD TO COMMIT *SEPPUKU*. IT'S AS SIMPLE AS THAT... RIGHT?

DIDN'T YOU SEE HOW THE COMMANDER WAS BEHAVING?

HE'S HIDING SOMETHING. I CAN TELL.

Fwap

DAMMIT!

Fwap

Fwap

WHAT'S GOING ON HERE?

WHY DIDN'T ANYBODY SAY A WORD TO ME ABOUT YAMANAMI COMMITTING *SEPPUKU*?

NOW HE'S DEAD.

YAMANAMI!...

HUFF

YAMANAMI?

HUFF

HUFF

BAM

BAM

BAM

BAM

BAM

I WANT TO SEE YA-MANAMI!

BAM

IS ANY-BODY THERE?

SOME-ONE, PLEASE OPEN THE DOOR!

BAM

CAW

CAW

CAW!

WHEN YOU TRY TO HIDE SOME-THING,

IT JUST MAKES PEOPLE WANT TO SEE IT EVEN MORE.

thp thp thp

HUFF

HUFF

SCUFF

IS THAT YOU?

SCUFF

YA-MANAMI!

SCUFF

Rattle

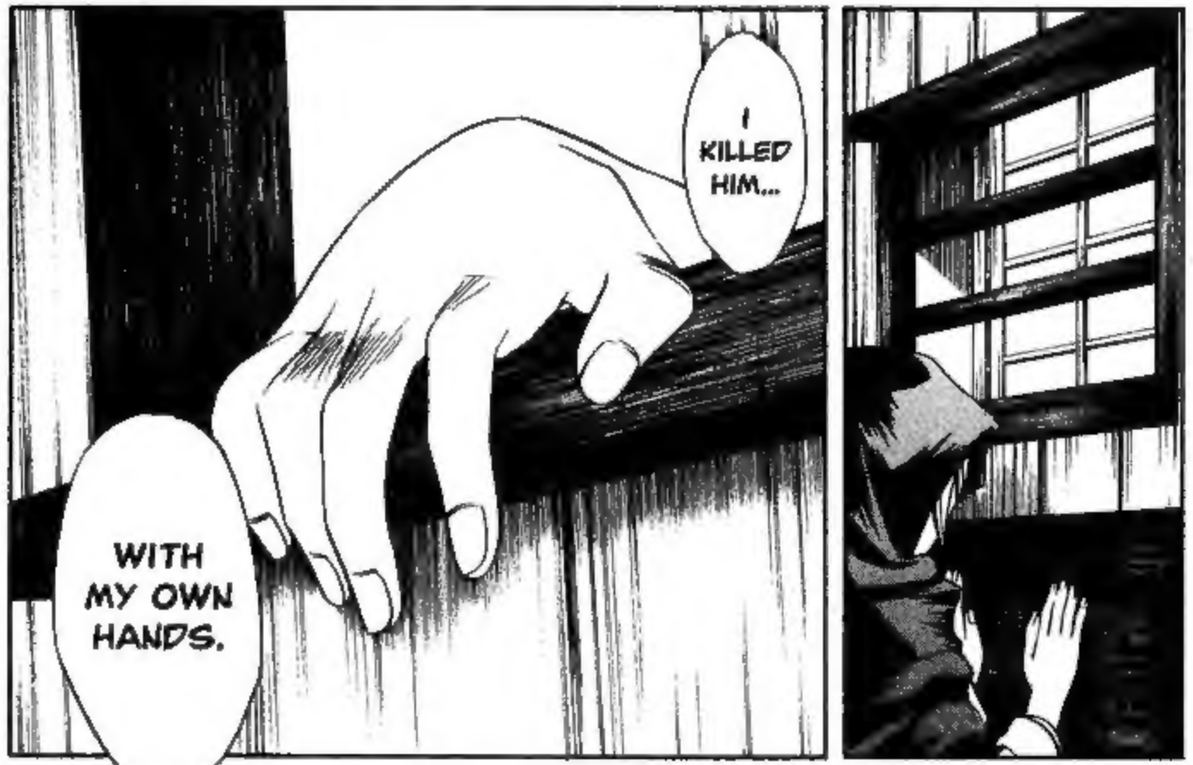
カタ

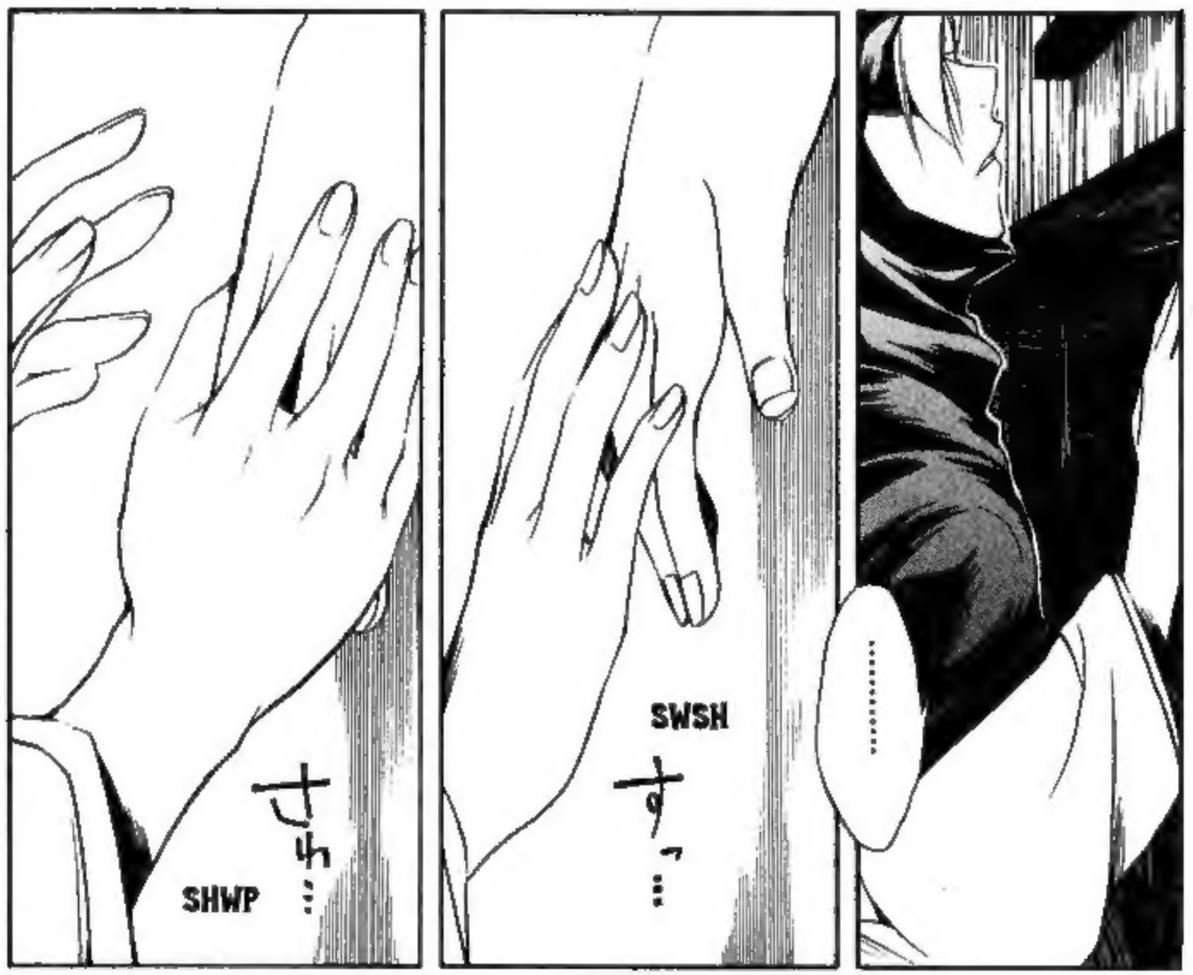
Rattle

カタ

tap tap

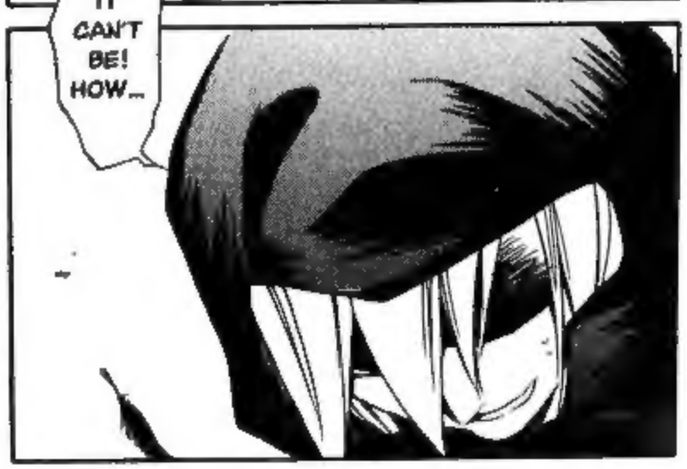
YAMANAMI IS DEAD.


I KILLED HIM...
WITH MY OWN HANDS.


SHWP
SWSH
.....

.....

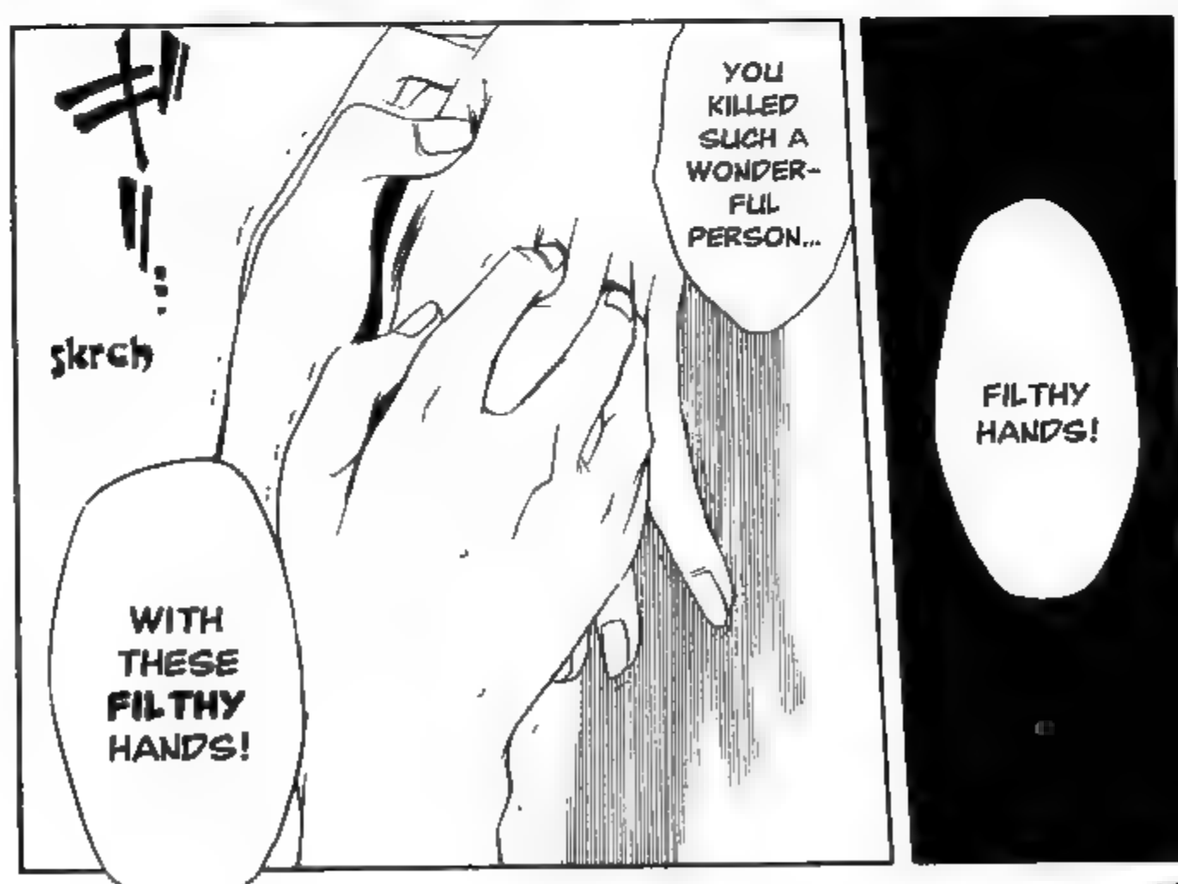
NO...
NO.


IT CAN'T BE! HOW...

FLAP
FLAP

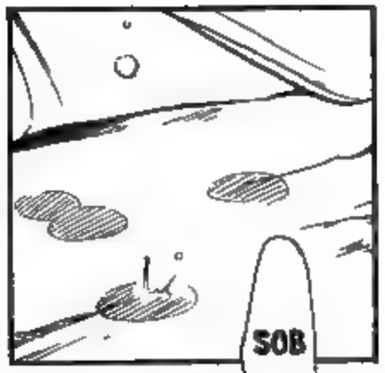
I...

YOU "WOLVES" OF MIBU ARE REALLY THE SHOGUNATE'S DOGS!
NO, YOU'RE LOWER THAN DOGS.
YOU DON'T EVEN CARE THAT YOU KILLED HIM!
I WANT TO TOUCH HIS HANDS!
GIVE HIM BACK TO ME!
I...


YOU KILLED SUCH A WONDER-FUL PERSON...
FILTHY HANDS!
skrch
WITH THESE FILTHY HANDS!

OH...
AKEGATO?

FWP
.....

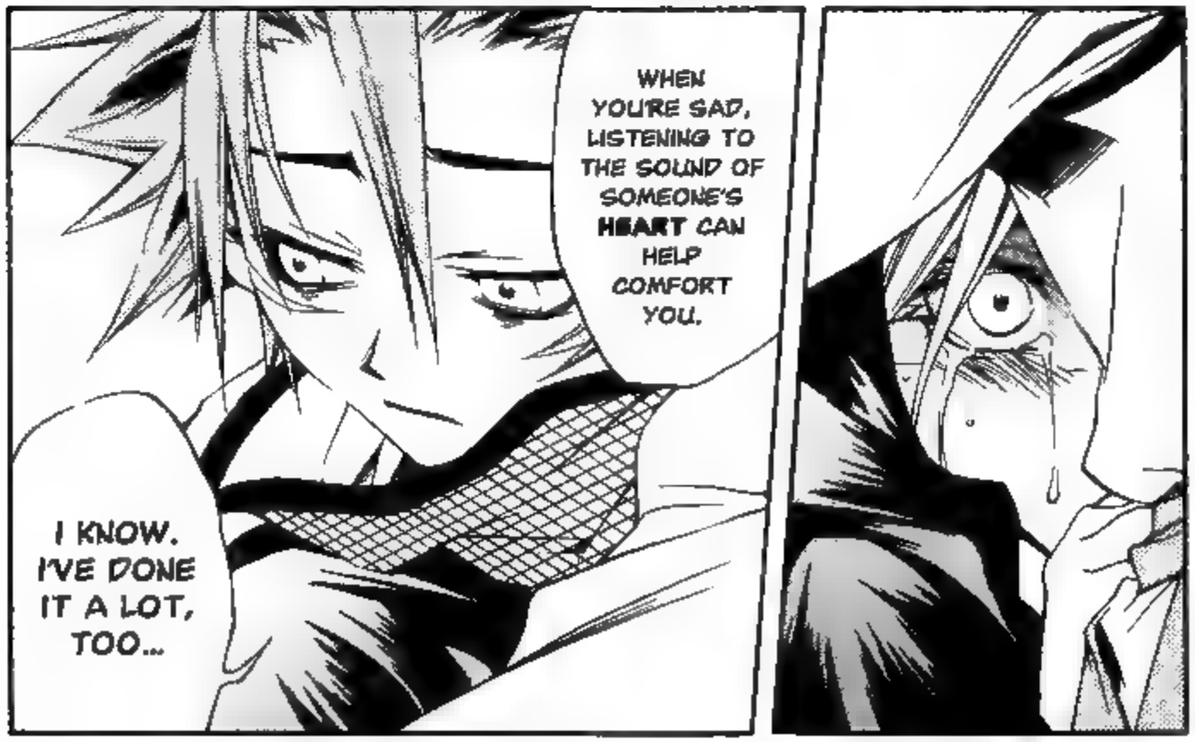

SOB

SOB
SOB

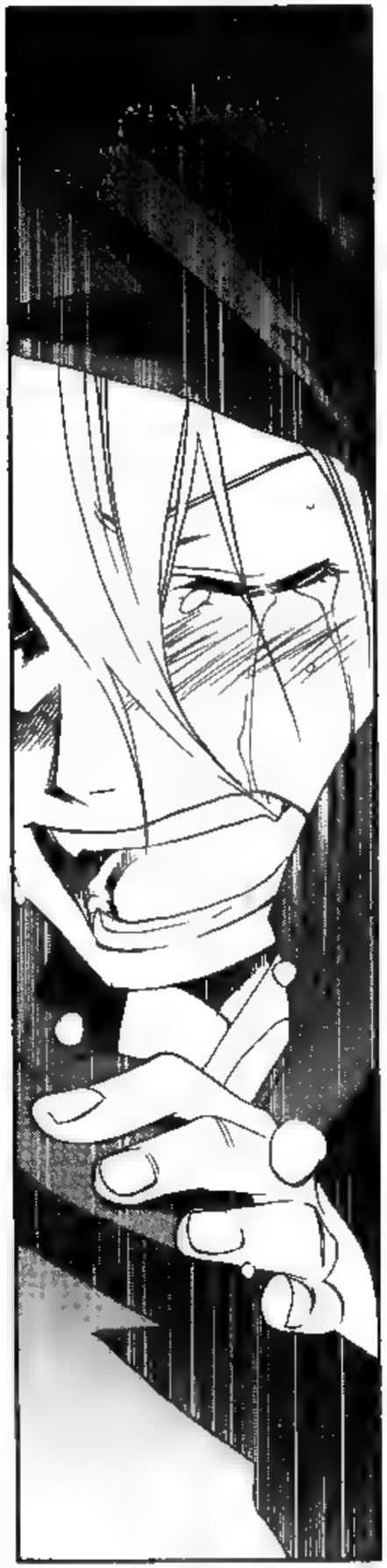
RUSTLE

I DON'T WANT YOUR FILTHY HANDS!

HUG
...


WHEN YOU'RE SAD, LISTENING TO THE SOUND OF SOMEONE'S HEART CAN HELP COMFORT YOU.
I KNOW. I'VE DONE IT A LOT, TOO...

SLIDE
.....
.....
RUSTLE



SOB
SOB

YAMANAMI!!
YAMANAMI!
YAMANAMI!
YAMANAMI!!

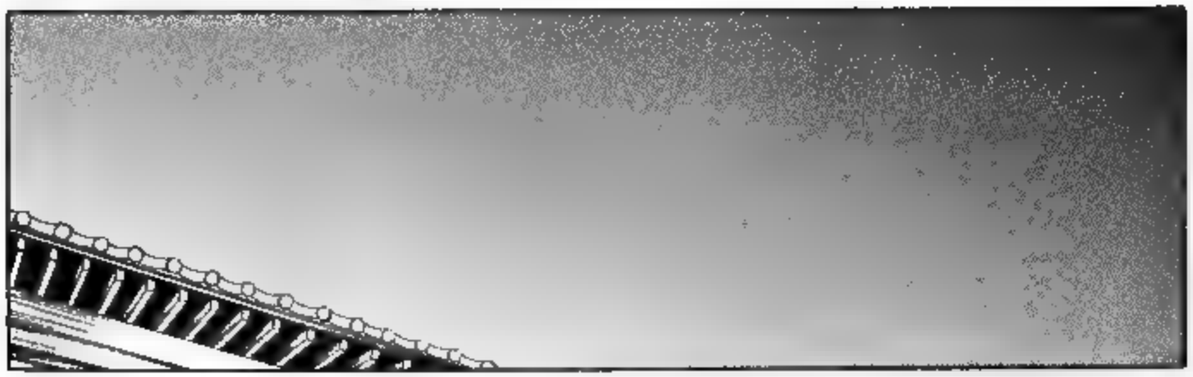
badump
badump
badump

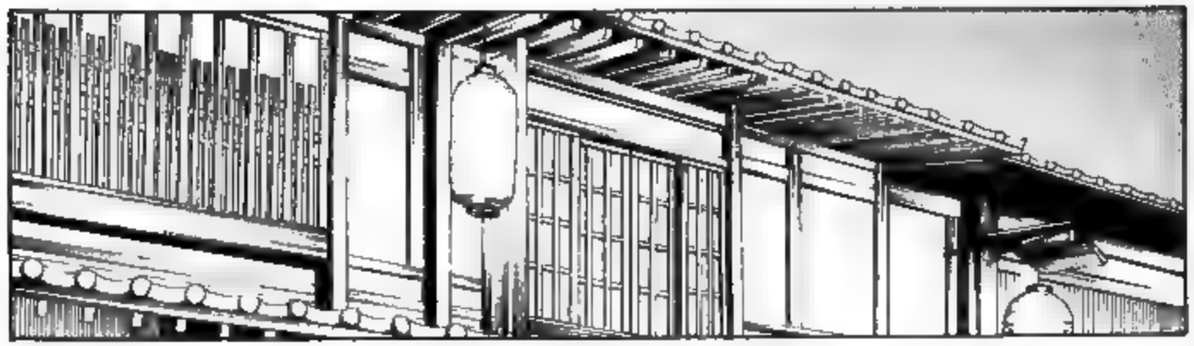
HUG
.....

badump
badump

AT ALL.
NO IDEA...

I HAVE NO IDEA...
WHY IT TURNED OUT THIS WAY.





zzz
zzz

waiyah!
aaaaaugh!

I'M SORRY FOR DIS-APPEARING
LIKE THAT

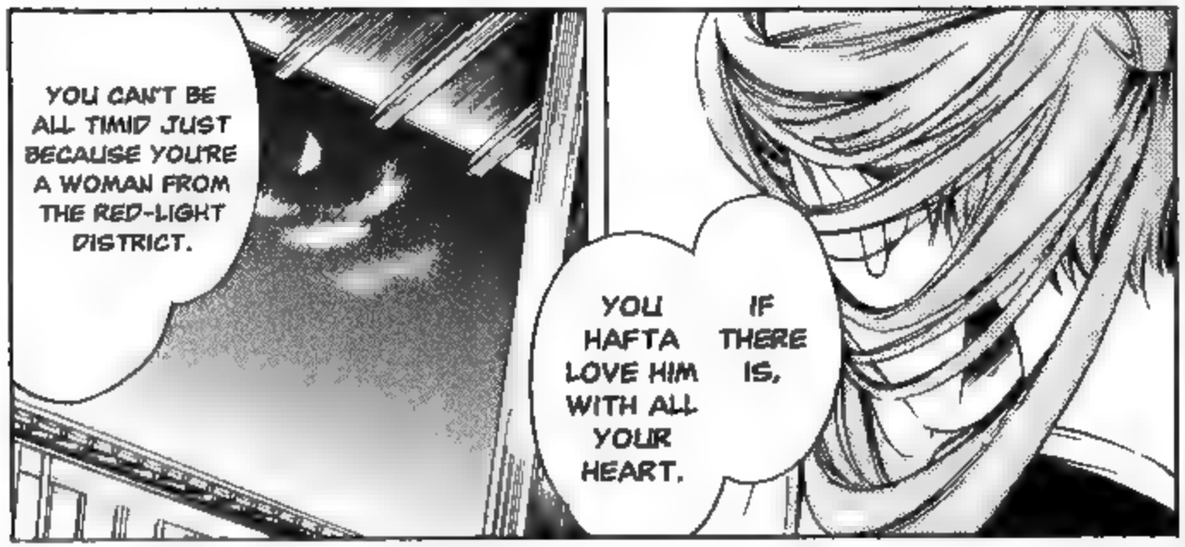
.....

DID I WAKE YOU?
SORRY.

SAYA?
YOU WAITED UP FOR A LONG TIME, DIDN'T YOU.

Y'KNOW. SOMEONE YOU LIKE?
IS THERE...

.....
.....


YOU CAN'T BE ALL TIMID JUST BECAUSE YOU'RE A WOMAN FROM THE RED-LIGHT DISTRICT.
IF THERE IS, YOU HAFTA LOVE HIM WITH ALL YOUR HEART.

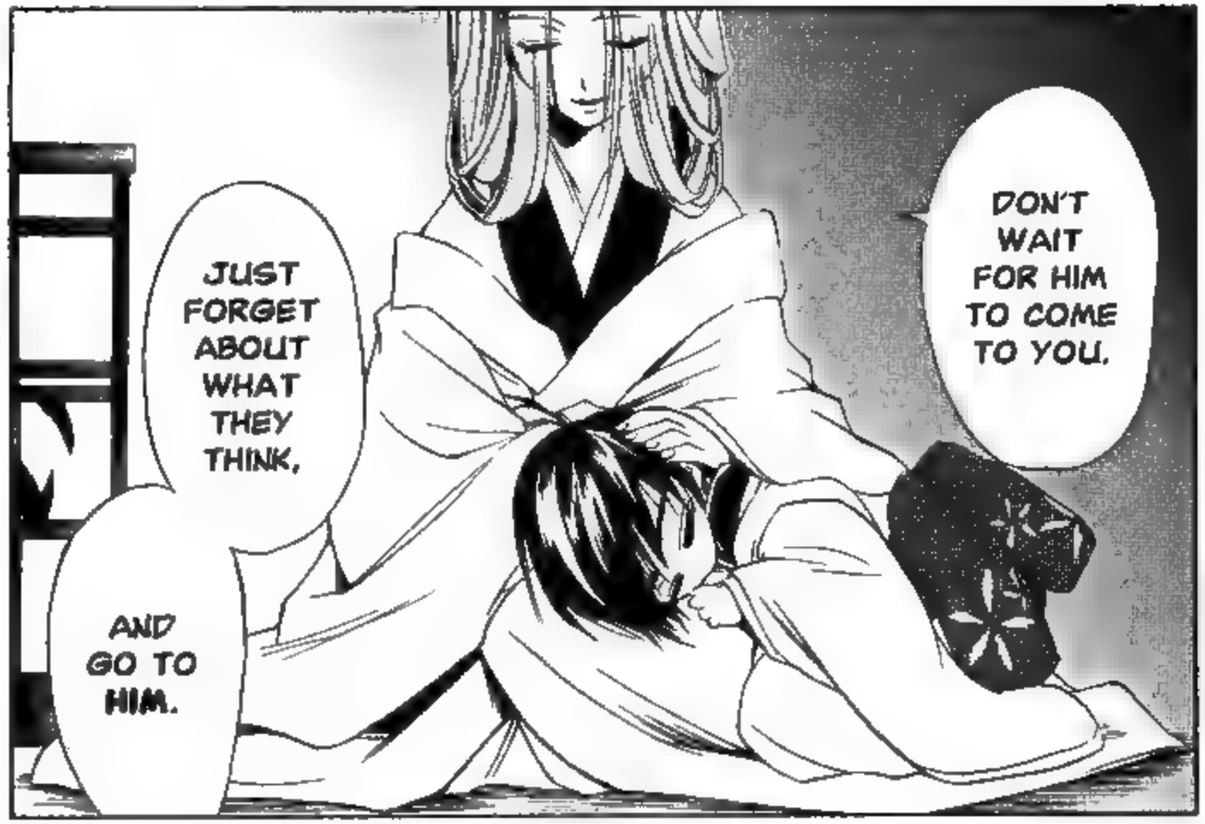
HEY.

WHY DON'T WE...

NEVER MIND.
SAYA.
CAN I ASK YOU SOMETHIN'?

...ん?
ZZZ
ZZZ
ZZZ
.....

FWSH
CREAK
ZZZ
ZZZ
ZZZ


DON'T WAIT FOR HIM TO COME TO YOU.
JUST FORGET ABOUT WHAT THEY THINK,
AND GO TO HIM.

NOW, GET SOME REST.
SORRY FOR SAYIN' SUCH STRANGE THINGS.
HEH HEH.

ALL I AM IS A LIVING CORPSE.

AND I MUST RETURN TO IT.

DARKNESS IS THE ONLY THING I HAVE LEFT...

AKESATO, THE WOMAN FROM THE "FLOATING WORLD..."

DIED WITH YOU TODAY.

YAMANAMI!

HIKAGAMI.
DO YOU FEEL LIKE GOING FOR A WALK?

CHAPTER 12

ENCOUNTER

?

HEY, LET'S GO PRAY TOGETHER.

I THINK IT'S SO HUGE BECAUSE IT'S THE MAIN TEMPLE OF THE JODOSHIN SECT.

.....

WILL BE HAPPY NO MATTER **WHERE** SHE WENT.

LET'S PRAY THAT AKE-SATO...

I'LL TAKE YOU INSIDE.

THEN LET'S GO.

OKAY?

NOD

SEE?

AIN'T IT **HUGE**?

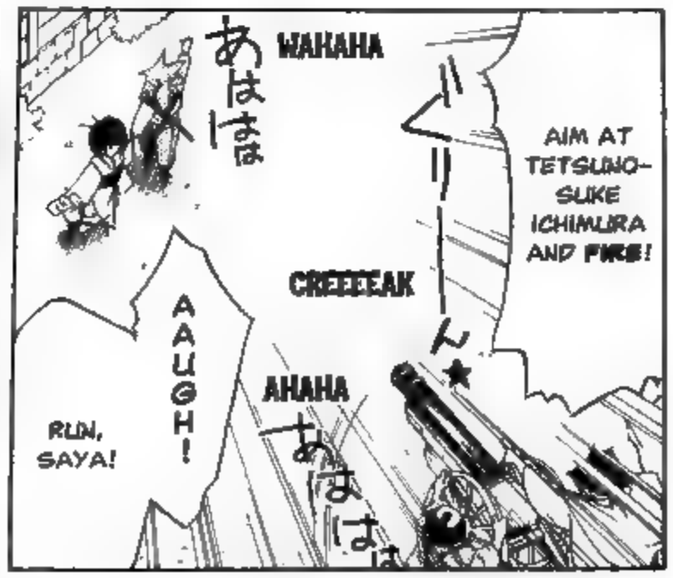
BUT OUR OLD PLACE IS **NOTHIN'** COMPARED TO THIS!

OF COURSE, OUR QUARTERS DON'T TAKE UP THE WHOLE TEMPLE...

I SEE YOU BROUGHT A GIRL BACK WITH YOU! LUCKY DOG!
WAVE
TWITCH
TETSU!
YO,

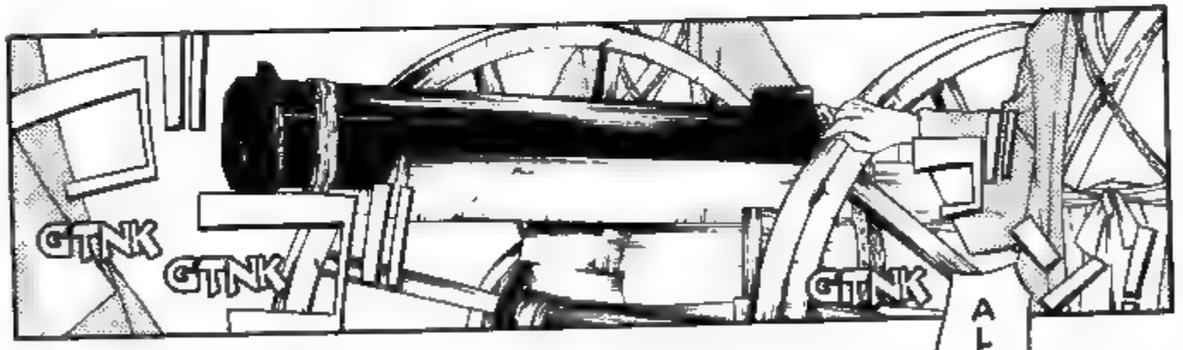
YOU TAKE ONE LOOK AT HER AND I'LL SHOVE THAT CANNON UP YOUR ASS!
WHAT THE?
FIDGET
HAHA! I BETTER NOT CATCH YOU CHECKIN' HER OUT, SANO!

AHAHA
.....

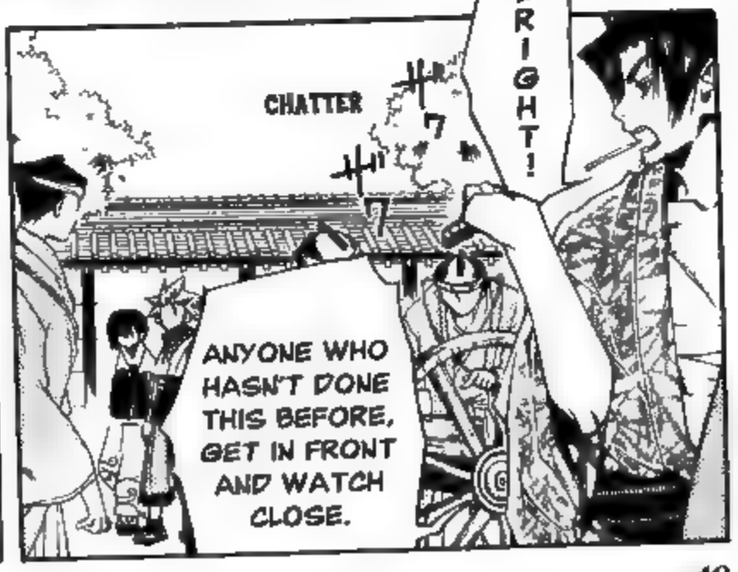

WAHAHA
あはは
AIM AT TETSUNO-SUKE ICHIMURA AND FIRE!
CREEEEAK
AAUGH!
RUN, SAYA!
AHAHA
あはは

?
UH...
HUH?
SKSH
SKSH
SKSH

BLUSH
...


GTNK
GTNK
GTNK

SHAKE
HEH HEH
SHAKE
YOU WANNA GO WATCH, TOO?


CHATTER
ALRIGHT!
ANYONE WHO HASN'T DONE THIS BEFORE, GET IN FRONT AND WATCH CLOSE.

squeal!

CATCH

CAUGHT 'EM ALL!

BONK

SKSSSSSH

WOW! THANKS A LOT, TATSUNO-SUKE!

OWW.

NO PROBLEM. LET ME CATCH THE SLIPPERY ONES.

I'VE GOTTEN A LOT OF PRACTICE, THANKS TO TETSU.

IS THAT SO?

POINK

AHAHA

SQUEAL

THP THP THP

SQUEEEAL

YOU'RE THE ONLY ONE LEFT.

?

stare

!!

WELL, I'M GOING TO REST A LITTLE.

MAKE YOUR-SELF AT HOME, SAYA.

PSHK

GOOD GRIEF...

OF COURSE NOT!

WHAT MAKES YOU SAY THAT?

twitch

ARE YOU SAYING YOUR BROTHER IS A PIG? HMM?

HAHAHA

OH, IT'S NO BIG DEAL.

HOW ARE YOU FEELING?

I SEE YOU BROUGHT YOUR CUTE FRIEND WITH YOU TODAY, TETSU.

OKITA!

BOW

HELLO

HEH HEH. TETSU'S TOLD ME ABOUT YOU, TOO.

SAYA, THIS IS OKITA. THE GUY I'M ALWAYS TALKING ABOUT.

OH.

CHUCKLE

PINCH

YOU CAN'T TALK, BUT YOU'RE REALLY CUTE. AND YOU NEED MORE PRACTICE ON THE SHAMISEN.

THP THP THP

I KNOW!

Bye!

IT'LL BE DARK WHEN SHE LEAVES,

SO MAKE SURE YOU WALK HER HOME.

TWITCH

IS YOUR MIND ALWAYS IN THE GUTTER?

HMM

I THOUGHT HE WAS JUST A LITTLE BRAT.

BUT IT LOOKS LIKE HE'S BEEN KEEPING HIMSELF BUSY. IF YOU FOLLOW ME.

hrmph

YOU EITHER

CAN'T YOU TELL? AND DON'T ACT LIKE TETSU'S DOIN' ANYTHING WRONG.

A FRIEND WHO'S A GIRL!

SHE'S A FRIEND!

point

?

SHE'S A GIRL, AIN'T SHE?

COUGH

COUGH

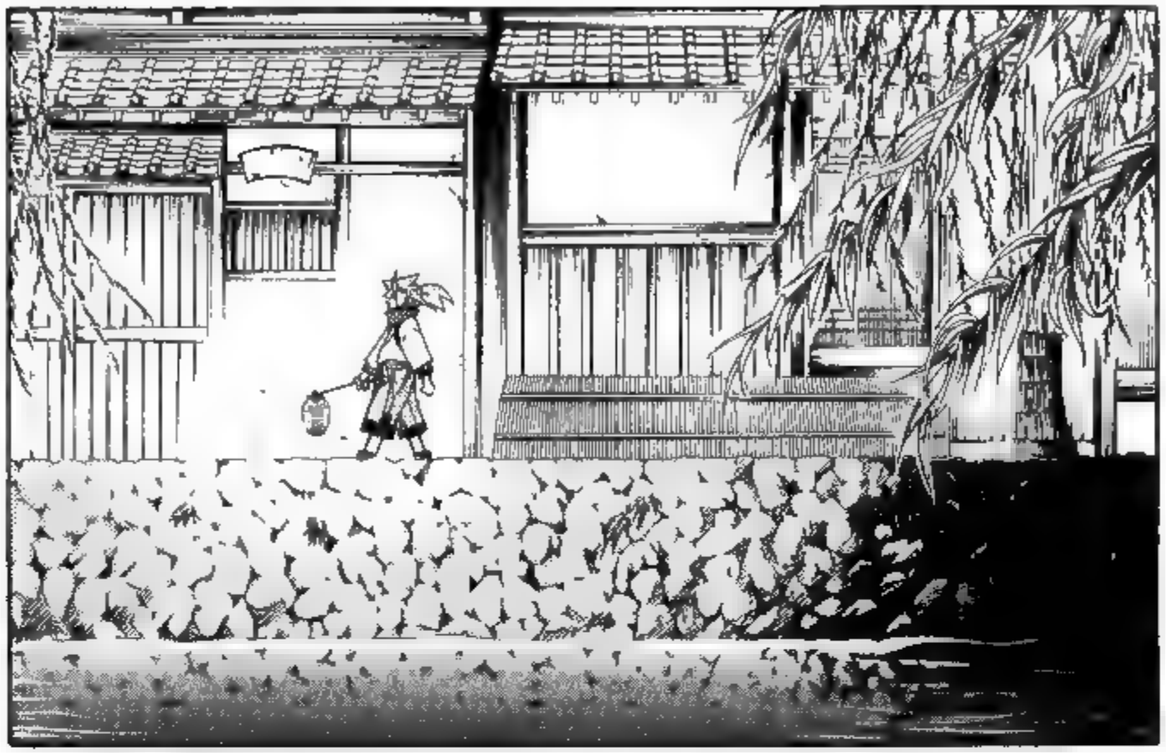
COUGH

COUGH

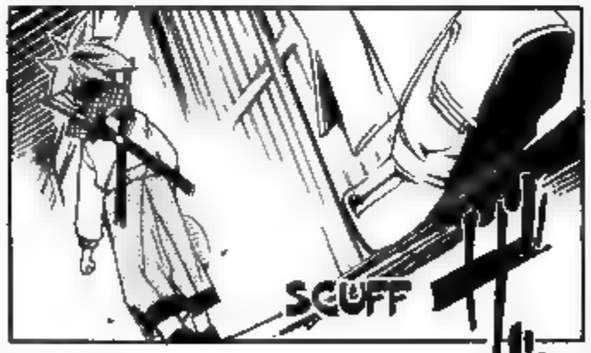
HA HA! YEAH. THERE ARE NOTHIN' BUT A BUNCH OF CREEPS IN THERE!

I DON'T THINK YOU SHOULD GO IN THE QUARTERS, THOUGH.

THEN WE'LL BE GOING, TOO.



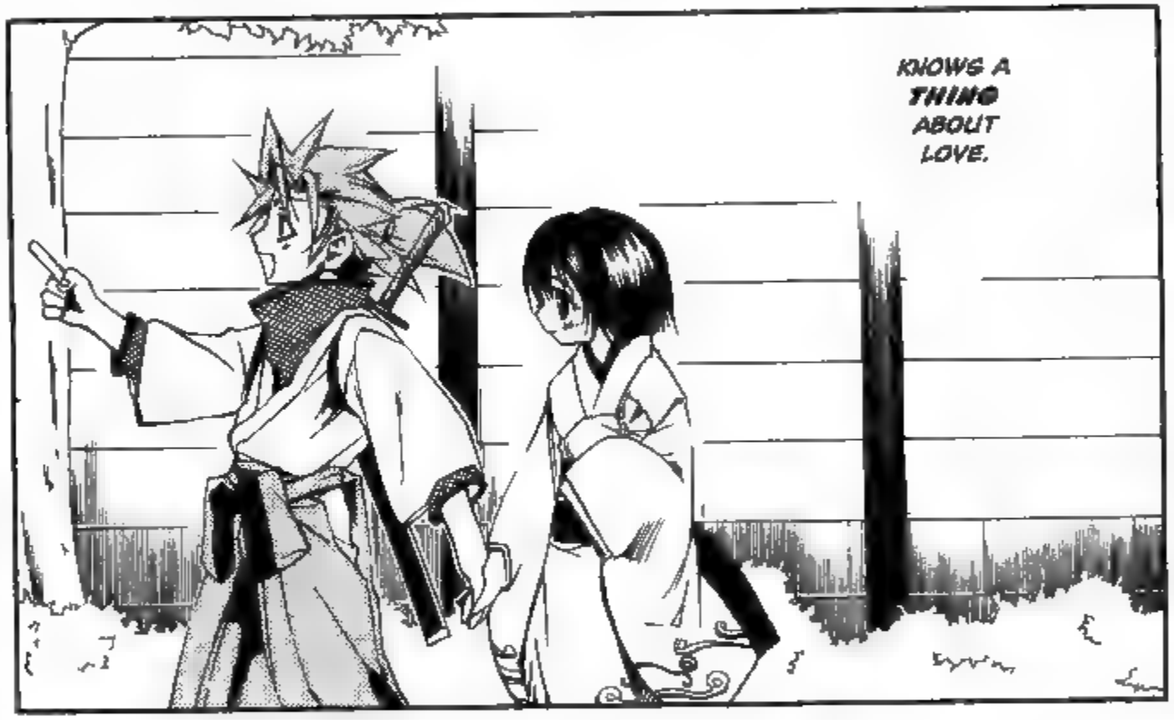
SCUFF

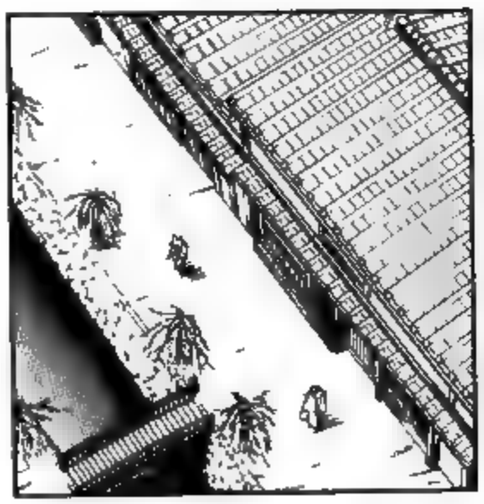

SCUFF

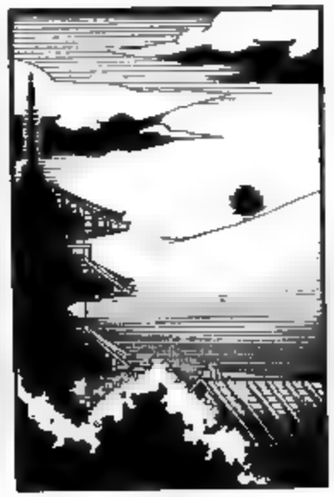
SCUFF

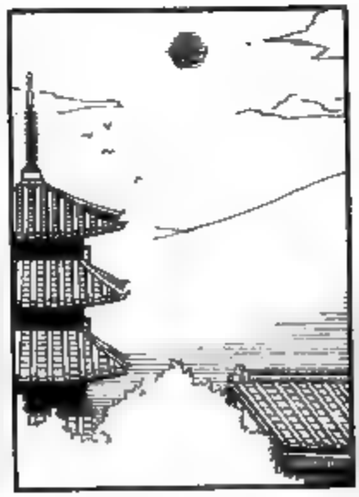
THE FOOD AT SAYA'S PLACE IS SIMPLE, BUT IT SURE TASTES GOOD!
AND IT'S FREE! ♪

NEITHER ONE OF THEM BROTHERS...
hmm
YA CAN TELL JUST BY LOOKING AT HER FACE.


KNOWS A THING ABOUT LOVE.







SSHK

SKSSSHH

stagger

...

HE'S...

WHO THE HELL'RE YOU?

SKRSH

?

BWSSSHH

BAM

THP

G-CHANG!

CLENCH

I DON'T SUP-POSE WE CAN TALK THIS OUT, HUH?

WOOOO

HE'S HUGE!

GULP

UHGH...

KCHING

W-

BWSH

WHOOA

CRAP.

CLUB

UGH...

SPLOOSH

IT'S NO USE.

HUFF

HUFF

HUFF

.....

.....

!!

SPLOOSH

GRAB

WAA

GLARE

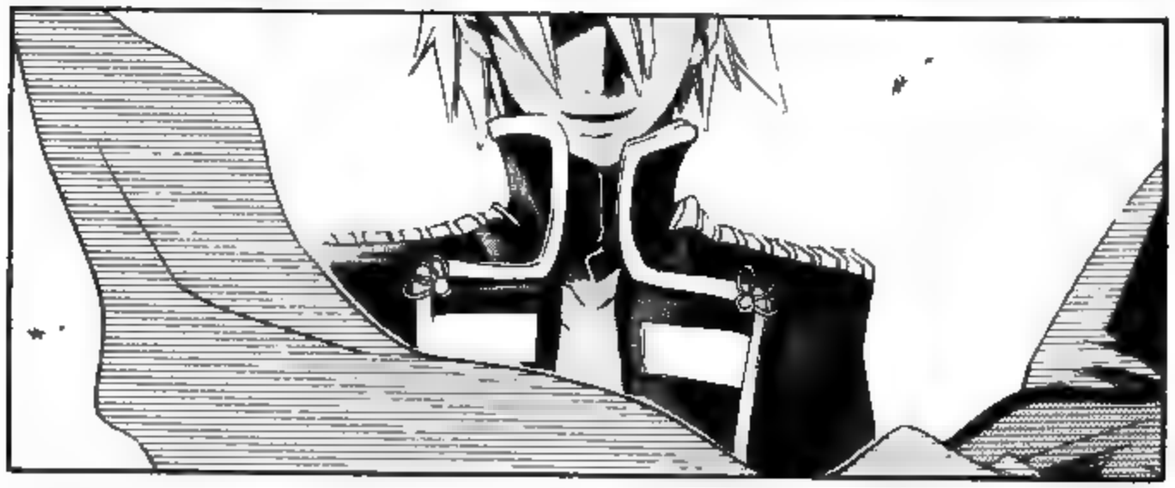
AAUGH!

AAAAA

HF
HF
HF
OH, TOO BAD.

THUD
SKSH
SKSH
BUT HIKAGAMI HAS A VERY HIGH TOLERANCE FOR PAIN.
THAT MOVE WOULD'VE WORKED AGAINST SOME OTHER OPPONENT...

FLAP
I KNOW THAT VOICE!
THAT VOICE...



SUZU!
YOU'RE ALIVE!
...
SU-

splish
splish

HMM...

A LOT'S HAPPENED.

YEAH, WELL...

clench

IT'S BEEN A WHILE, TETSU.

HOW ARE YOU? GOOD?

I'M FINE.

I'M DOING GREAT!

Nod Nod

Y-

YEAH.

DID YOUR FRIENDS DIE?

OR... HOW CAN I PUT THIS?

DID YOUR MASTER DIE?

NO, BUT...

THEN WHAT DO YOU MEAN, A LOT HAPPENED?

YOU'VE GOTTEN TALLER SINCE THE LAST TIME I SAW YOU.

AND YOUR FACE LOOKS DIFFERENT, TOO.

scuff

scuff

scuff

scuff

SUZU... THANK GOODNESS! I'M SO GLAD YOU'RE ALRIGHT!

OH, COME ON.

WE JUST HAVEN'T SEEN EACH OTHER IN A WHILE. NO REASON TO MAKE A BIG DEAL OUT OF IT.

WHA?!

BLUSH

THEN YOU'VE HAD SEX WITH A WOMAN?

YEAH, KINDA.

UH...

HUH?

SAY, DO YOU STILL GO TO SHIMABARA?

WHAT?
YOU HAVEN'T DONE ANY OF THOSE...
YET?

HEH HEH
HEH HEH
THEN WHAT IN THE WORLD DO YOU MEAN.
"A LOT HAP-PENED"?

HOW IS YOUR LIFE IN THE SHIN-SENGUMI?
WELL, THEN...

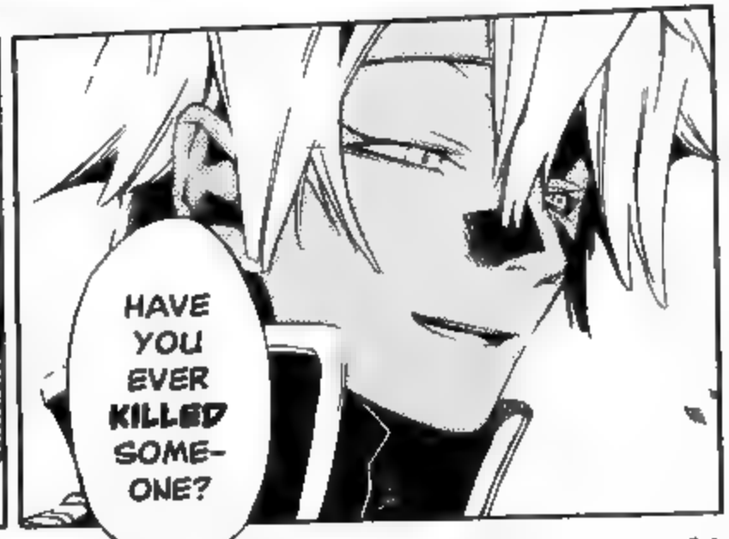
...!
SLIDE

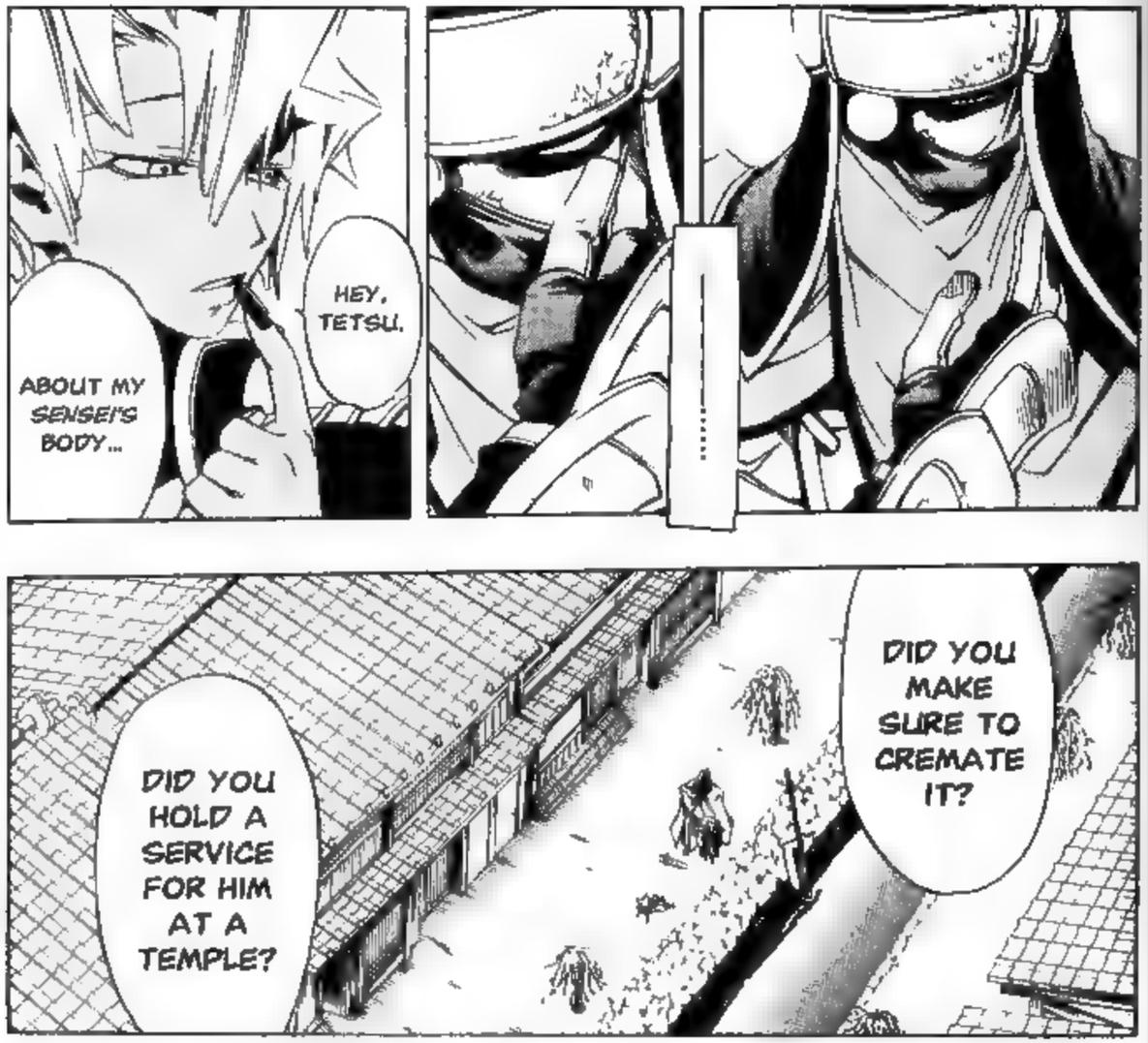
SLIDE

EVER BEEN VIOLATED BY A MAN?
HAVE YOU EVER SOLD YOUR-SELF?
WH-WH-WHAT ARE YOU GETTING AT, ASS-HOLE?

IF YOU HAVEN'T DONE ANY OF THOSE, THEN, FOR THE SAKE OF YOUR OWN LIFE OR GOALS...
HAVE YOU EVER BEEN FORCED TO DO THINGS FOR CHUMP CHANGE?
OR STOLEN FOOD, OR MONEY?
HAVE YOU EVER EATEN ROTTEN SCRAPS?

SUZU.


HAVE YOU EVER KILLED SOME-ONE?


ABOUT MY SENSEI'S BODY...
HEY, TETSU.
.....
DID YOU HOLD A SERVICE FOR HIM AT A TEMPLE?
DID YOU MAKE SURE TO CREMATE IT?

IF YOU DON'T HOLD A PROPER SERVICE FOR HIM...
BECAUSE YOSHIDA-SENSEI WAS AN AMAZING MAN.

YOU WERE WEARING THEIR UNIFORM THAT NIGHT...
HOW?
THAT I'M IN THE SHIN-SENGUMI?
HOW DID YOU KNOW...

SHWA
KCHK
OH...
THANK YOU, HIKAGAMI.
AT THE IKEDA INN.
THE NIGHT MY SENSEI WAS KILLED.

CHAPTER 13

ANOTHER

HE MIGHT JUST...

COME BACK TO LIFE.

AAAAUGH!

HA HA! YOU'RE SUCH A DORK!

PRICE-LESS!

YOU SHOULD SEE THE LOOK ON YOUR FACE!

AH HA HA HA HA HA!

HA HA HA! TETSU REALLY THOUGHT *SENSEI* CAME BACK TO LIFE! HA!

SEE, HIKAGAMI? DIDN'T I SAY YOU LOOK JUST LIKE HIM?!

HEH HEH HEH.

IS RIGHT HERE.

THE **REAL** *SENSEI*

OH, MAN...

HEH HEH HEH

I CAN'T BELIEVE YOU TOOK ME SERIOUSLY, IDIOT! HA HA!

I SAW IT!

HIS...

Scuff

HIS HEAD GOT CUT OFF!

SLIDE

HOW...

.....

B-BUT HE SHOULD BE **DEAD!**

Waaargh!

...

HEH.

HEH HEH HEH.

"IT WASN'T ME. ORITA KILLED HIM."

THAT'S WHAT I WANT TO SAY, BUT...

IT WASN'T... IT...

ASSASSIN DOG

WELL? DON'T YOU WANT TO SAY ANYTHING?

"KILL OR BE KILLED."

I WAS JUST SAVED FROM HAVING TO KILL HIM MYSELF.

OH, MAN...

I WOULD'VE PREFERRED A HIGH-QUALITY RED LACQUER.

BUT SENSEI ALWAYS LIKED BLACK.

I HAD HIM FINISHED WITH THE FINEST LACQUER BY THE BEST CRAFTSMAN.

DOESN'T HE LOOK MOE?

SUZU HAS SNAPPED.

SUZU

HE GOT HIS HEAD CUT OFF BY A LITTLE BRAT LIKE YOU

I FEEL SORRY FOR HIM.

SENSEI IS THE ONE WHO SHOULD BE CRYING

HEH.

HEY, WHAT ARE YOU CRYING FOR?

SNIFF

スン…

SUNU!

SU...

DEATH WOULD BE TOO **EASY** FOR YOU.

MY SENSEI ORDERED ME TO.

I WAS SUP-POSED TO KILL YOU.

WHEN I SAW YOU THAT THIRD TIME...

AS REVENGE FOR YOUR *SENSEI*?

WILL YOU TAKE MY LIFE...

GOING TO KILL ME?

ARE YOU...

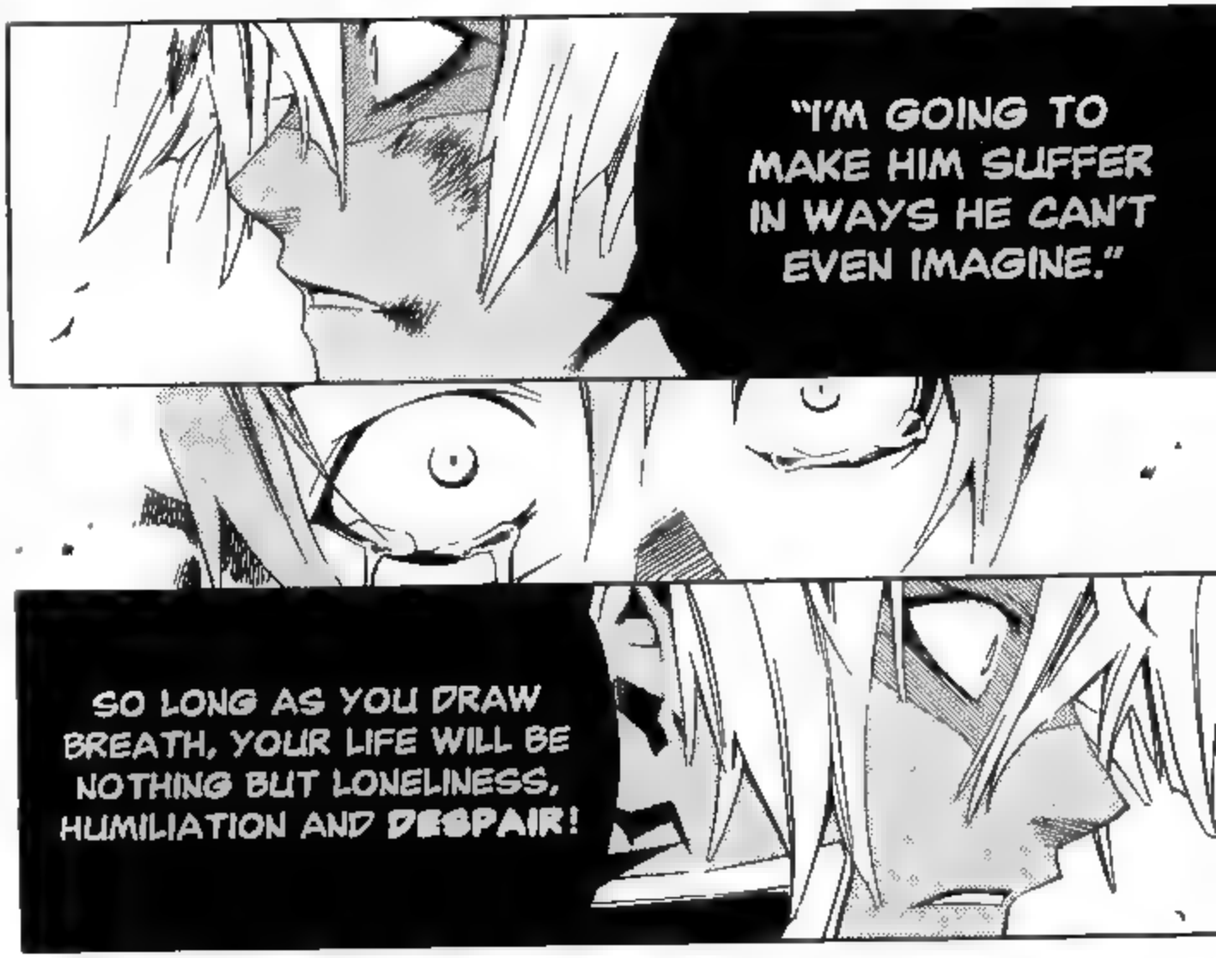
I WOULDN'T DO...

SOME-THING LIKE **THAT.**

DON'T BE SILLY.

SNEER
YOU KNOW, TETSU...
.....
THE JOYS OF HEAVEN AND THE TORTURES OF HELL...
HEAVEN IS THE DESIRE OF THE GREEDY.
AND HELL IS THE DELUSION OF THE HELPLESS, BORN OF INFERIORITY AND JEALOUSY.
THEY ALL EXIST HERE, IN THIS WORLD.
SCUFF
YOU CAN EVEN TRY TO KILL ME.
GO AHEAD AND HATE ME IF YOU WANT.
SCUFF
SNEER
ISN'T THAT RIGHT?

AFTER 2 MONTHS, I FINALLY FOUND MY ANSWER.
"WHY DIDN'T I KILL HIM?" "WHY DID I SAVE HIM?"
AS I HELD MY SENSEI'S ROTTING CORPSE, I THOUGHT...
AND I LOST THE ONLY PERSON I COULD RELY ON BECAUSE OF IT.
BUT I DIDN'T. I'D ONLY MET YOU THREE TIMES, BUT I SAVED YOU.


"I'M GOING TO MAKE HIM SUFFER IN WAYS HE CAN'T EVEN IMAGINE."
SO LONG AS YOU DRAW BREATH, YOUR LIFE WILL BE NOTHING BUT LONELINESS, HUMILIATION AND DESPAIR!

A few days later

TOK

I WONDER WHAT'S WRONG WITH HIM.

CHATTER

IT'S LIKE HE'S ALL DEPRESSED AGAIN.

CHATTER

CHATTER

AND HE WON'T TALK TO ME ABOUT IT.

SUZU...

WHEN YOU HAVE TEARS OF BLOOD IN YOUR EYES, AND YOU'RE MISSING A LEG OR TWO,

WHEN YOU COME CRAWLING TO ME, YOUR FACE COVERED IN MUD AND FILTH...

THEN I CAN SAY, "AH, I'M GLAD THAT I LET YOU LIVE."

I'LL BE WATCHING YOU,

TETSU.

UNTIL THAT DAY COMES...

HE'S AN **ADULT**, EVEN IF HE LOOKS LIKE A KID. HE CAN TAKE CARE OF HIMSELF.

BUT HE'S 16 ALREADY.

WELL, TETSU **IS** YOUNGER THAN THE REST OF US...

.....

THEY'D RATHER HANDLE IT THEM-SELVES.

BESIDES, AT HIS AGE, GUYS DON'T TALK ABOUT THEIR PROBLEMS.

.....

IT WOULDN'T BE LEAVING HIM **COMPLETELY** ALONE— YOU'D BE WATCHING OVER HIM.

IF HE DOESN'T WANT TO TALK, YOU SHOULD JUST GIVE HIM SOME SPACE.

UH, NOT QUITE.

gloom

A RE-BELLIOUS PHASE, HUH?

HUMBLE

TETSU'S BEEN NOTHIN' BUT DE-PRESSED, EVER SINCE HE JOINED THE SHIN-SENGUMI.

AND HE **FINALLY** JUST GOT OVER THAT THING WITH YAMANAMI, TOO...

amazin'

CHATTER

CHATTER

WOW

WE GET IT, ALRIGHT? NOW LAY OFF THE SAKÉ. IT'S TOO EARLY TO BE DRUNK!

UH, TATSU...

?

BEIN' HERE REALLY ISN'T GOOD FOR HIS **EDU-CATION!**

I'M GOOD FOR NOTHIN'.

TETSU'S TELLIN' THINGS TO HIS FRIEND YAMAZAKI THAT HE WON'T TELL ME.

GULP

LEAVE ME ALONE! DRINKIN'S THE ONLY THING I CAN DO AS GOOD AS ANYBODY ELSE.

UH, I THINK HE CAN DO IT **BETTER**...

SNIFF

HE'S THE BIGGEST DRINKER I'VE EVER HAD!

I'LL GIVE YOU A DIS-COUNT!

HA HA! THANK YOU!

ピピピ chirp! chirp!

AHHH

IT'S SPRING ALREADY?

Rattle

THANK YOU! COME AGAIN!

.....

I DON'T EVEN FEEL AS DRUNK ANY-MORE.

WHAT A NICE BREEZE.

.....

I'll have to commit seppuku for this.

ANYWAY, DON'T WORRY ABOUT IT. IT WAS FUN.

WHOA! YOU'RE SOBER ALREADY?

THAT WAS FAST!

I DON'T KNOW WHAT TO SAY!

And we said we'd teach

.....

YEAH.

I KNOW.

TOK

WE CAN'T GET USED TO IT, BUT WE DON'T HAVE TIME TO CRY, EITHER.

BUT SOMEONE DIES EVERY DAY. EITHER A FRIEND OR AN ENEMY.

THAT'S ALL WE CAN DO. JUST MOVE ON.

BUT HE'S FINALLY STARTING TO LAUGH AGAIN.

HEISUKE GOT REALLY DE-PRESSED TOO.

IT'S LIKE...

EVERY-ONE'S FORCING THEM-SELVES TO SMILE.

TWITCH.

!!

WAAAAOCH!

FIRE!

!

SOMEONE CALL THE FIRE BRIGADE!

IT'S AT GION!

Rrrrrrrr

WELL, IT'S ALMOST TIME FOR PATROL.

SHALL WE HEAD BACK TO QUARTERS?

SORRY. I'M GOING TO SOBER UP A LITTLE MORE FIRST.

chirp

chirp chirp

I'M NOT GOOD FOR ANY-THING.

REALLY...

IF I'M GONNA BE GOOD AT SOME-THING...

IT COULD AT LEAST BE SOMETHING ***USEFUL.***

HF

HF

HAS ALREADY GOTTEN THROUGH HIS PROBLEMS.

TETSU...

HF

BLECH

FLAP

WHAT AM I DOING?

UGH

I ENDED UP RUNNING OVER HERE TO WATCH.

TALK ABOUT A BAD HABIT.

A FIRE ISN'T ANYTHING THAT UNUSUAL, BUT...

URGH...

...

Twinge

WAFT

WAFT

OH, I DIDN'T SEE YOU THERE.

SORRY, MAN.

TA-DAAA

...!!

GYAAUGH!!

DRAGON BOOOY!

WH-

WHAT THE HELL?

YO! ☆

PLUNK

THUD

OH!

THANKS A LOT...

WHO'S THERE?

THWUMP

AND WHAT ARE YOU DOING THROWING GARBAGE AT ME?!

THP THP THP THP HUH?

WHAT AM I RUNNING FOR?

PAT I DON'T HAVE ANYTHING TO DO WITH THIS.

THP THP THP PARTNER!

WE GOTTA GET OUT OF HERE, MAN!

MAAMIGHI THD THD THD DAMN HIM!

OH IT'S RYOMA SAKAMOTO!

DASH

GET HIM!

I feel sick...

I WONDER IF THE BIG GUY UPSTAIRS IS TRYIN' TO TELL ME NOT TO SIT AROUND!

YEAH...

AND THEN THIS FIRE BROKE OUT!

I WAS TAKIN' A BATH 'CUZ I HADN'T GOTTEN ONE IN A WHILE, SEE.

I'M ONE OF THE SHINSEN-GUMI, YOU KNOW. AND WE'RE AFTER YOU.

BY THE WAY, ARE YOU SURE YOU SHOULD JUST BE STANDING HERE?

LIKE THAT MIMAWARI-GUMI GUY OVER THERE!

YOU GOTTA AT LEAST ACT LIKE YOU'RE AFTER ME...

HUUH? THAT DIDN'T SOUND VERY CONVINCING.

I KNOW YOU'RE A GOOD FIGHTER...

Gulp

BUT HOW ARE YOU GOING TO TAKE ON ALL THOSE MEN?

GUESS WE DON'T HAVE A CHOICE.

SHALL WE?

shhk

AGAINST THOSE GUYS.

I THINK THIS WILL BE ENOUGH

え

WHAAAT?!

!!?

HERE.

WE CAN'T HAVE YOU FIGHTIN' UNARMED.

fwp

SKSSSHHH

WAAUGH!

SAKAMOTO?!

SKREEE

WE'RE SUR-ROUNDED!

WE...

WOO! DAMN, THEY'RE GOOD!

BAM

BAM

BAM
BAM
BAM
Eeek!
KTNK
THP
THP
THP
AUGH! IT'S MOVING!
WAAAUGH!
Thwamp
CLATTER
whoosh
DRAGON BOY!
RUN FOR THE CART!
R-
RIGHT!
kchk

BAM

BAM

CLATTER

spak

spak

WAAUGH!

THD-D-D-D

EEEEK!

DON'T LET HIM GET AWAY!

KNOCK HIM OFF THAT THING!

CLATTER

KA-CHIING

WELL THAT'S NICE AND ALL, BUT...

THD-D-D-D

HA HA HA ...!!

Aaaaugh!

NO

splaash

HOW DO YOU STOP THIS THING?!

SKSSSH

crackle

AH HA HA HA HA!

DON'T WORRY!

kaching

S-SAKA-MOTO!

HURRY! GET ON!

shwp

HA HA HA

THD-D-D-D

sksssshhh

I HAVEN'T BEEN RUNNING ALL OVER JAPAN FOR NOTHIN'!

IT LOOKS POWERFUL, BUT SHE'S ACTUALLY A DELICATE LADY.

OH YEAH! I HAFTA GET THE WATER OUT OF THIS, TOO.

DAMN HIM...

HEY, THAT WAS A COLD THING TO SAY TO THE GUY WHO JUST SAVED YOUR LIFE, MAN!

BLEH

BLEH

KTNK

MY WALLET'S GONNA BE HURTIN'!

I'M GONNA HAVE TO GET MORE.

THE GUN-POWDER IS SHOT...

I THINK MY HEART SKIPPED A BEAT WHEN WE FELL.

shiver

shiver

shiver

shiver

crackle

PHEEW.

MAN, WE'RE LUCKY WE LANDED IN A RIVER!

SIGH

IF I STAY WITH YOU, THEY MIGHT GET THE WRONG IDEA AND TRY TO KILL ME AGAIN.

ONCE I GET WARMED UP, I'M LEAVING.

FLAT OUT

I'M BETTER OFF WITHOUT IT. THEY WOULDN'T KILL AN UNARMED MAN.

SWORD, HUH? YOU CAN'T PROTECT YOURSELF UNARMED!

STILL, I MADE THE RIGHT CHOICE GIVING YOU THAT

WHO ASKED YOU?

I FEEL ALIVE ENOUGH AS IT IS, THANK YOU.

COME ON, MAN! YOU NEED A LITTLE EXCITEMENT ONCE IN A WHILE! LETS YOU KNOW YOU'RE ALIVE!

CHAPTER 14

GUN弐

SAKA-
MOTO?

WHERE
CAN I
GET...

A
PISTOL
LIKE
THAT?

k-tk

roll

crackle
DEJIMA IN NAGASAKI? A STORE FOR FOREIGNERS?
OR DID YOU GET IT ON THE BLACK MARKET?
I DIDN'T BUY THIS.
A GUY NAMED TAKASUGI GAVE IT TO ME. IT'S SPECIAL.

PLEASE, TELL ME.
WHERE CAN I BUY ONE?

PLEASE, I'M BEGGING YOU!

I'LL NEVER USE IT TO DO WRONG!

BAM!

TELL ME WHERE TO GET ONE!

YOU NEEDED MORE GUNPOWDER. SO YOU MUST KNOW WHERE TO GET A GUN, TOO.

BUT YOU JUST SAID...

...

ゴト tnk

kchk

YOUR REGULAR GUY OFF THE STREET CAN'T GET HIS HANDS ON 'EM.

THEY DON'T SELL THESE THINGS IN JAPAN.

SCRATCH SCRATCH SCRATCH

...

I KEPT TELLING MYSELF SOMETHING LIKE THAT'S NOT RIGHT FOR ME...

I JUST CAN'T GET IT OUT OF MY HEAD.

BUT...

IN THAT GUN EVER SINCE I SAW IT.

TO TELL YOU THE TRUTH, I'VE BEEN INTERESTED

LA LA LA

WELL NOW, I WONDER IF IT'S DRIED OUT YET?

UM, GETTING BACK TO THE PISTOL...

I'M GETTIN' TO IT!

NOT EVERYBODY CAN DO THAT, MAN.

YOU GOTTA TRAIN HARD...

YOU HAFTA GET FASTER THAN YOUR OPPONENT, AND HAVE MORE **GUTS** THAN THEM, TOO.

NOW, COMPARE WHAT I WAS JUST TALKING ABOUT TO A PISTOL.

HE'LL DROP DEAD ON THE SPOT. HE WON'T EVEN HAVE TIME TO SCREAM.

IF YOU SHOOT SOMEONE IN A VITAL POINT,

A GUN CAN FIRE SIX SHOTS IN A ROW.

THE BULLET CAN HIT YOU IN THE BLINK OF AN EYE, **AND** FROM A DISTANCE. IT'S LIKE GETTING HIT BY INVISIBLE ARROWS.

WITH A SWORD?

HOW GOOD ARE YOU...

WITH A SWORD?

HUH?

UH...

IT TAKES A LOT OF **EFFORT** TO GET GOOD ENOUGH TO KILL PEOPLE WITH A SWORD.

IS HE BRAG-GING?

I HAVE NO INTENTION OF LOSING AGAINST SWORDS-MEN LIKE **THEM.**

CRR

NOT SO GOOD... NO GOOD AT ALL, ACTUALLY.

I'VE BEEN RECOG-NIZED AS A MASTER IN THE HOKUSHIN ITTO STYLE. I WAS A HEAD INSTRUCTOR...

IT'S HARD TO JUST WOUND AND NOT KILL.
WITH SOME-THING THAT POWER-FUL,
YEAH, BUT I DON'T WANT TO KILL PEOPLE.

YOU FOLLOW ME? IF YOU CAN'T HANDLE A SWORD, HOW CAN YOU CONTROL SOMETHING EVEN MORE DEADLY?
THE "KILL OR BE KILLED" LIFE...

JUST AIN'T RIGHT FOR YOU.

...
crackle

LIKE THIS.
YOU JUST MOVE YOUR FINGER,
WHEN YOU WANNA KILL SOME-ONE...

THAT'S ALL THERE IS TO IT.
AND PULL THE TRIGGER.
YOU GET THE TARGET IN YOUR SIGHT...

...
crackle

WHY DON'T YOU STEAL THAT ONE RIGHT THERE?

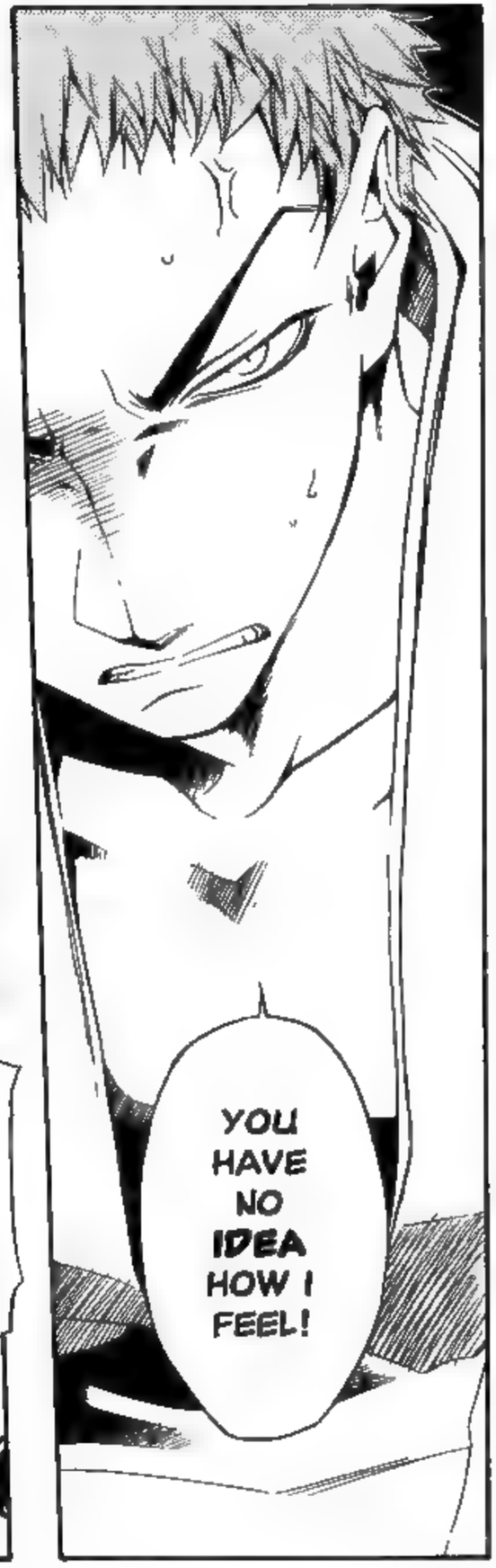
TWITCH

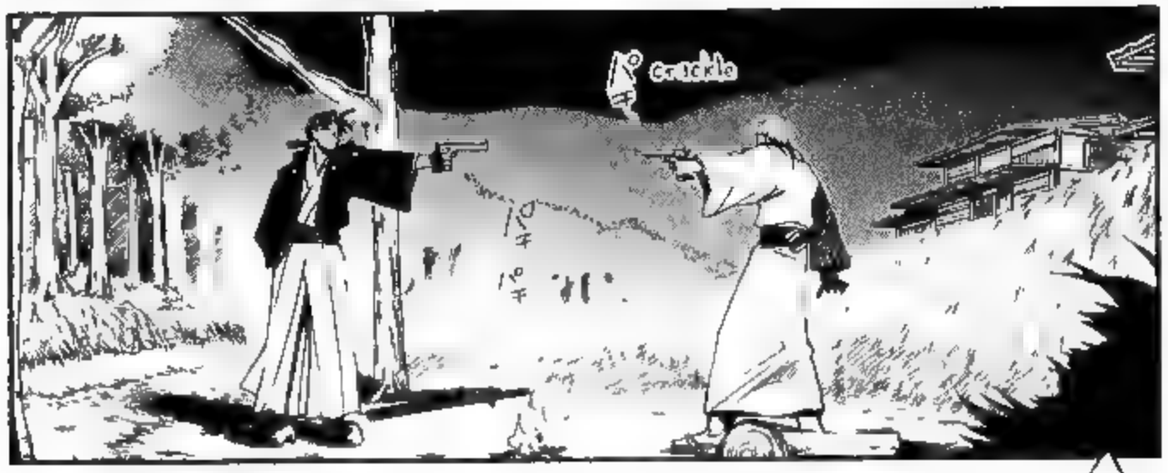
K-CHK
LUNGE

WHAT A PAIN.
SIGHE

YOU WANT A PISTOL THAT BAD, HUH?
shotto scratch

WELL, IN THAT CASE...
THAT'S WHAT I'VE BEEN TELLING YOU!


YOU HAVE NO IDEA HOW I FEEL!


Crackle

I'LL TELL YA ONE MORE TIME, MAN.
kchk
HUFF
tremble
HUFF
HUFF

THIS AIN'T RIGHT FOR YOU.
SOME PAY. THAT GUN
SCUFF
SCUFF

KA-SHING!!
...!
"ALWAYS BE PRE-PARED."
THAT'S WHAT THEY SAY, RIGHT?

ALL THIS PONTIFICATIN' IS MAKIN' MY POOR HEAD HURT!

PHEEW

MAN...

は

THWUMP

...!

CLENCH

I'M TRYIN' TO BE LIKE THE PEACE-MAKER.

NO HARD FEELINGS, DRAGON BOY.

CRUNCH

I'M GOING HOME.

...

AND I WANT YOU TWO SONS OF HIS TO BE HAPPY.

THE PERSON YOU CARE ABOUT THE MOST.

IS GONNA BE POINTED AT...

huh?

snatch

I'LL JUST TAKE THIS BACK.

!!

Sup

I WOULD **NEVER** POINT A GUN AT TETSU.

G'BYE,

DRAGON BOY.

.....

sksh

sksh

YEAH.

I'M GONNA CALL IT A DAY, TOO.

.....

sksh

RUSTLE

SAKA-MOTO.

ABOUT THAT LITTLE SPEECH:

YOU MADE ONE MISTAKE.

FUNNY, HE JUST ASKED ME THE SAME THING 'BOUT YOU.

sigh

IF IT'S NOT ONE OF YA, IT'S THE OTHER.

hrrm

...

DO YOU THINK TATSU'S BEEN ACTING STRANGE LATELY?

...

I DON'T KNOW. I THINK THERE MIGHT BE SOMETHING **ELSE** GOING ON.

MAYBE YOU SHOULD GO CHECK ON HIM. TRY TO GET HIM OUT.

HE JUST STAYS IN HIS ROOM...

IT'S LIKE HE'S **OBSESSING** OVER SOMETHING.

May, Keio 1 (1865).

Shin-sengumi Quarters, West Hongan Temple

CHIRP

TWEET

TWEET

TWEET

...

FWSH

THINK

HEY.

SU-SUMU.

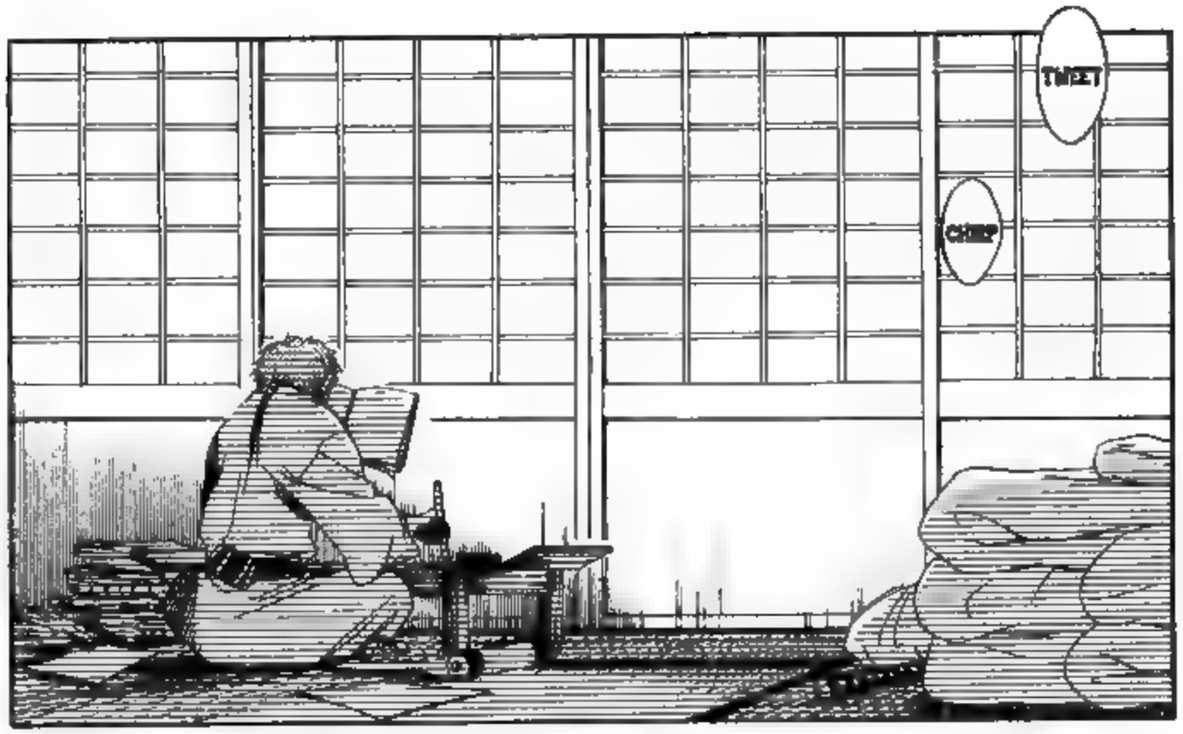
TWIPING

BY THE WAY, TETSU.
OKAY...
OH, SORRY.
WHY DON'T YOU TWO GO ON AHEAD?
IF YOU HAD TIME, I THOUGHT YOU COULD EAT WITH ME AND SUSUMU.

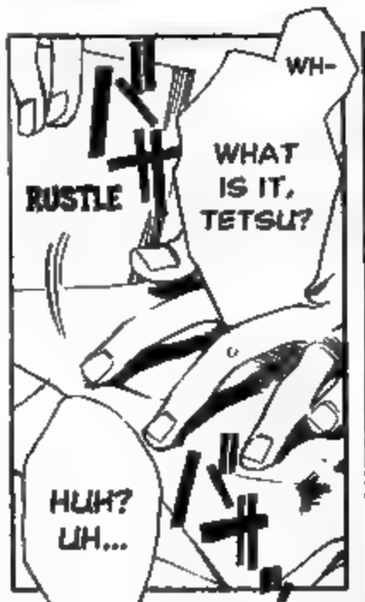
UH...
WELL...
HUH?!
HAVE YOU WORKED OUT WHATEVER YOU WERE WORRIED ABOUT?

WELL, IT'LL BE ALL RIGHT.
NO.
NOT REALLY.

AND UNTIL YOU DO WORK IT OUT, I'LL DO WHAT I CAN.


TWEET
CHIRP

CHIRP


RUSTLE
WH-
WHAT IS IT, TETSU?
HUH? UH...

JUMP
WHAA?!
UMM, TATSU?
...

SWISH

SO DON'T WORRY ABOUT IT.

ARE YOU FOR REAL, SANO? THIS STORY SOUNDS A LITTLE **TOO** GOOD...

SO THE CHICK WHO DRAGGED ME THERE WAS REALLY A **GUY**. AN' WHEN HE RAN AT ME, I FENDED 'IM OFF WITH MY SPEAR, LIKE **THIS**!

WASN'T THAT IN A **PLAY** WE JUST SAW?

ボ
DOOOOH

AHAHA!

HEY, IT'S THE TRUTH! AND WHEN I CHASED HIM DOWN, FOUR OF HIS BUDDIES SHOWED UP WITH PARASOLS, AND...

THP THP THP THP THP THP

CAPTAIN!

CAPTAIN!

?

TATSU?

SCUFF

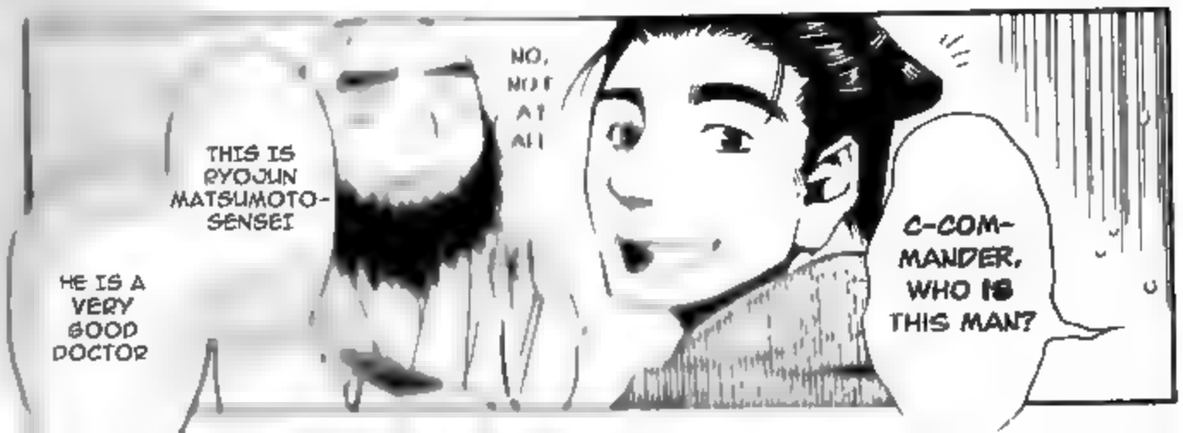
CHIRP

STOMP
STOMP
STOMP
WHOOAA
HEY! HEY, YOU BIG BEAR!
M-MAY I HELP YOU?
SHOULDN'T A BEAR HAVE A SALMON.
AND NOT A BOAR?
STOP BEIN' AN IDIOT!
KONK
WHAT'S THE BIG IDEA, JUST WALKIN' ON IN HERE?!
UH, SAIO?
...
WHAT ARE YOU DOING TO OUR GUEST?!
RAAARGH
WHAT WAS THAT FOR, SHINPACHI?
YOU WANNA PIECE OF ME?!
BAM
GROWL
HRMPF

BAM
A BEAR!
DU-DUM
NO, I MEAN...
THERE'S A BOAR!
EMERGENCY!
HUH!?
はぁ？
熊だ
!!!!
IT IS A BEAR!
TA-DAAA

SHINE
GWAHAHA!
I WAS JUST WONDERING WHAT KIND OF GIFT TO BRING YOU, WHEN I SAW THIS BOAR!
EXCUSE MY APPEAR-ANCE!
SPARKLE
OOH!
SO NICE OF YOU TO VISIT!
WELL, WELL, IF IT ISN'T MATSU-MOTO-SENSEI!

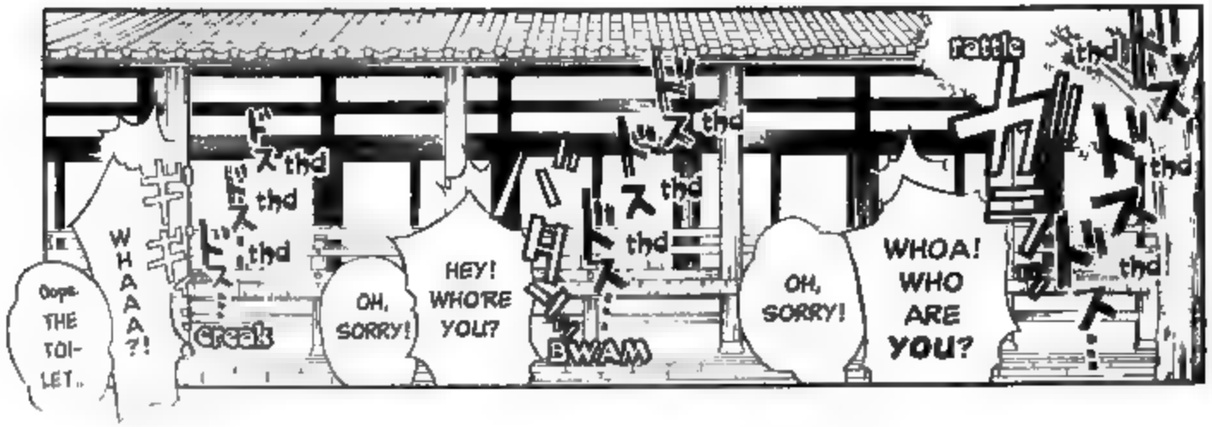
OH GO, YOU'RE ALL CAPTAINS, EH?
OH. THIS IS SHINPACHI NAGAKURA, HEISUKE TODO, AND SANOSUKE HARADA.
SHIVER
UH... AHEM?

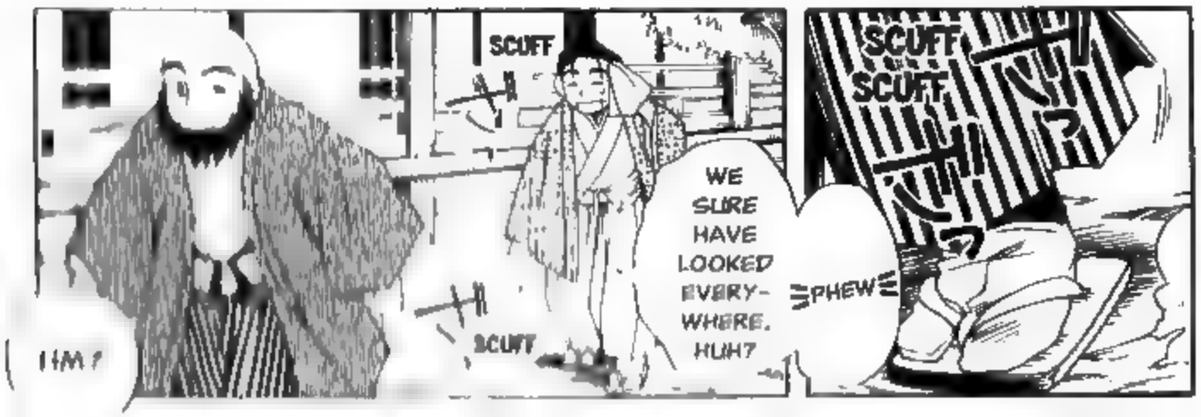

THIS IS RYOJUN MATSUMOTO-SENSEI
HE IS A VERY GOOD DOCTOR
NO, NOT AT ALL
C-COM-MANDER, WHO IS THIS MAN?

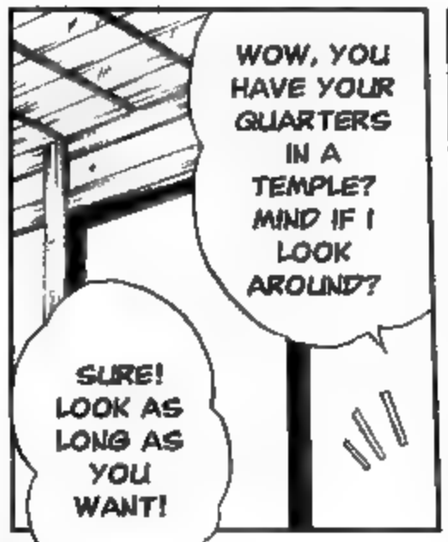
EAT!
FOINK

ONE'S TOO SMALL AND THE OTHER'S TOO SKINNY! THEY'LL NEVER BE ABLE TO FIGHT UNLESS THEY EAT SOMETHING!
GWAHAHA!
BIG GUYS LIKE YOU ARE ALWAYS HUNGRY, RIGHT? AND WHAT ABOUT THOSE TWO BEHIND YOU?

COULD YOU BRING KONDO-DONO?
HEY GUYS! THIS WONDERFUL, GENEROUS MAN HAS SHOWN UP WITH SOME FOOD!
HUH? THE COM-MANDER?!
SOME-BODY BRING A POT AND LIGHT A FIRE!





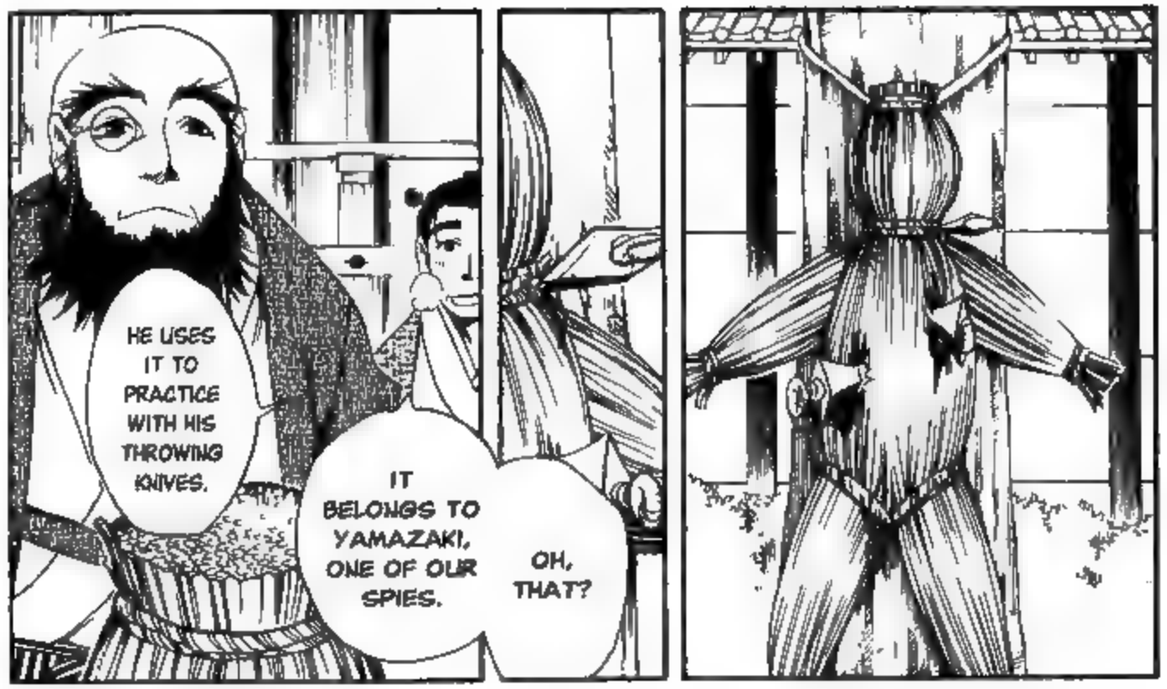


RYOJUN MATSUMOTO (1832-1907) WAS BORN INTO A FAMILY OF DOCTORS IN EDO. HE STUDIED WESTERN MEDICINE IN NAGASAKI AND WORKED AS THE HEAD OF THE SHOGUNATE MEDICAL SCHOOL.

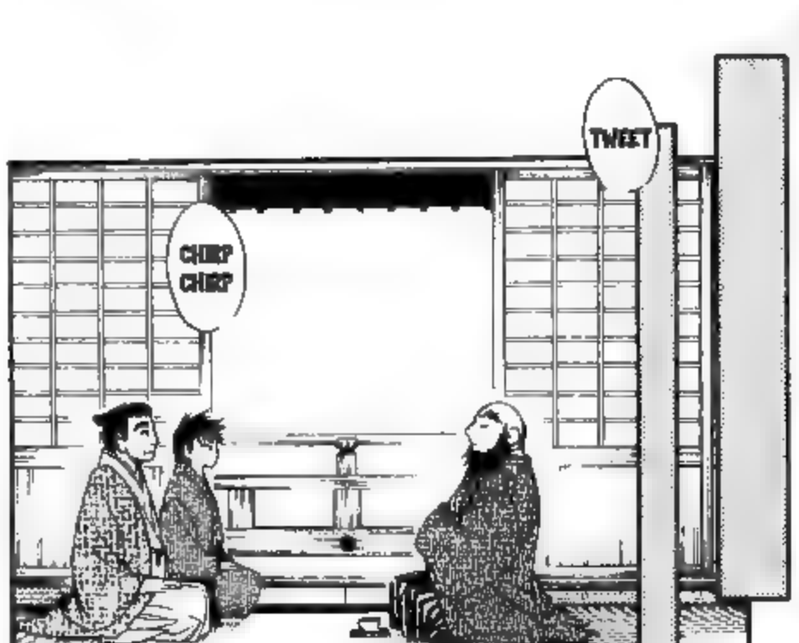
H-HOW MANY?
HOW MANY MEN DO YOU HAVE ENLISTED?
KONDO-DONO.
...
HMMM

...
LET'S SEE... I THINK THERE'S ABOUT 140.

BLINK
COULD TELL FROM SEEING THE MEN IN THEIR ROOMS JUST NOW...
AS FAR AS I
?
?
THIRTY PERCENT, THEN.


HE USES IT TO PRACTICE WITH HIS THROWING KNIVES.
IT BELONGS TO YAMAZAKI, ONE OF OUR SPIES.
OH, THAT?

COULD I MEET WITH HIM?
KONDO-DONO.


TWEET
CHIRP CHIRP

THERE'S SOMETHING IMPORTANT I WANT TO TALK TO HIM ABOUT.

I WILL HAVE MY STUDENT, NANBU, COME EVERY MORNING TO MAKE ROUNDS AND ADMINISTER MEDICATION.

I WILL ALSO VISIT TWO OR THREE TIMES A WEEK.

FIRST, MAKE A **BATH HOUSE**, AND BE SURE EVERYBODY STAYS CLEAN.

THEN, SET UP A SICK ROOM THAT'S WELL-LIT AND HAS GOOD CIRCULATION. BRING ALL THE SICK AND INJURED THERE, AND HAVE THEM REST IN CLEAN BEDDING. DESIGNATE TWO OR THREE PEOPLE TO TAKE CARE OF THEM.

ONE MORE THING.

AHEM

TH-THANK YOU VERY MUCH!

NO MATTER HOW MANY TIMES NANBU AND I COME, WE STILL WON'T BE ABLE TO HANDLE SO MANY PATIENTS. SO...

YES.

YOUR NAME IS YAMAZAKI, CORRECT?

OR INCAPACITATED FROM SOME SORT OF **ILLNESS**.

ABOUT THIRTY PERCENT--THAT'S 40 MEN--WERE EITHER SERIOUSLY INJURED...

PLEASE SAVE THEM, MATSUMOTO-*SENSEI!*

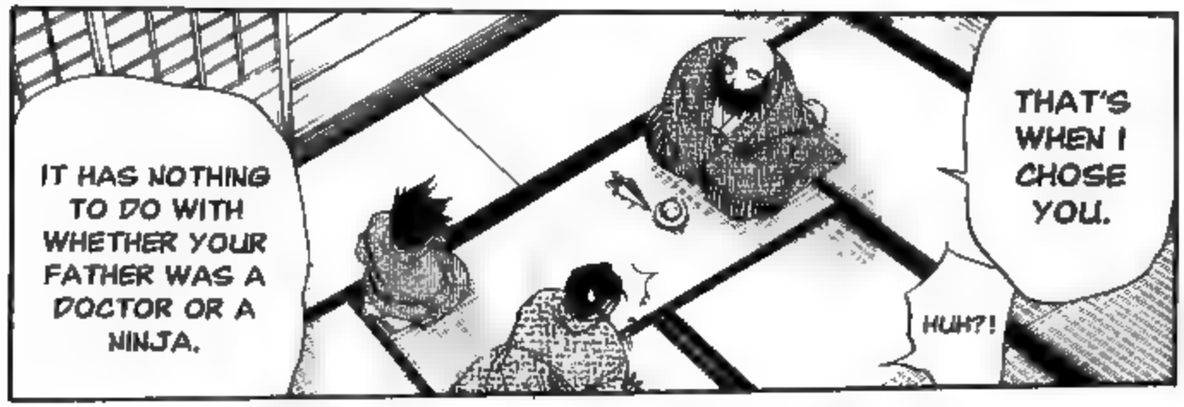
THEY ARE THE ONES I REALLY WANTED YOU TO SEE.

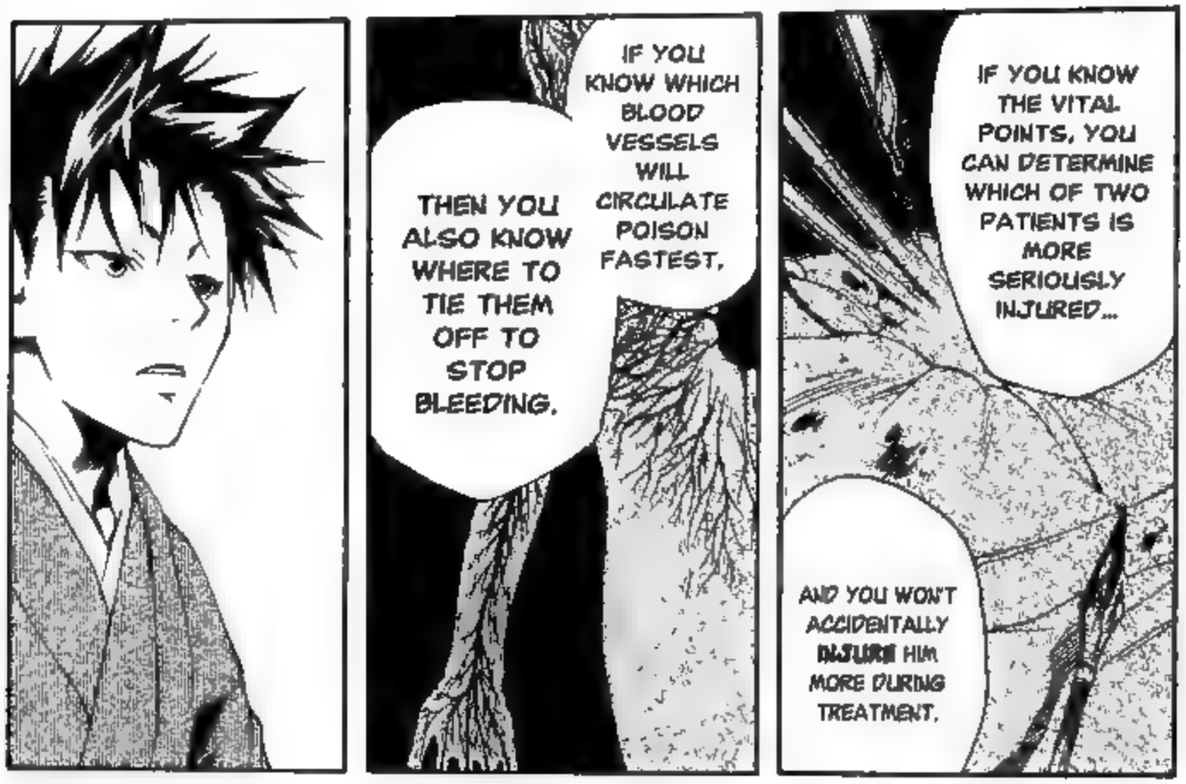
I APOLOGIZE FOR TRYING TO DECEIVE YOU.

I WANT TO DO PERIODIC EXAMINATIONS, OF COURSE. AND THERE ARE SEVERAL THINGS I'D LIKE TO SEE IMPROVED HERE.

HMPH. I COULDN'T IGNORE THIS SITUATION, EVEN IF YOU WERE TO **REFUSE** MY HELP!

I SAW A PRACTICE DUMMY THAT WAS HIT ONLY AT VITAL POINTS.
tok
IN THE GARDEN A LITTLE WHILE AGO...


IT HAS NOTHING TO DO WITH WHETHER YOUR FATHER WAS A DOCTOR OR A NINJA.
THAT'S WHEN I CHOSE YOU.
HUH?!

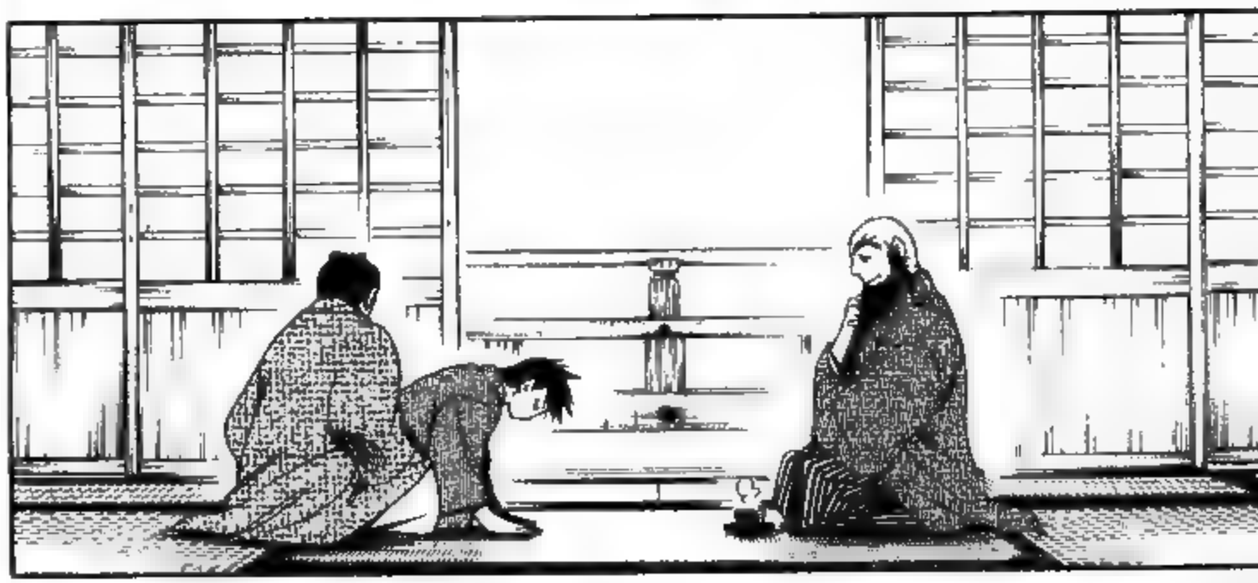

THEN YOU ALSO KNOW WHERE TO TIE THEM OFF TO STOP BLEEDING.
IF YOU KNOW WHICH BLOOD VESSELS WILL CIRCULATE POISON FASTEST,
IF YOU KNOW THE VITAL POINTS, YOU CAN DETERMINE WHICH OF TWO PATIENTS IS MORE SERIOUSLY INJURED...
AND YOU WON'T ACCIDENTALLY INJURE HIM MORE DURING TREATMENT.

SO YOU CAN ACT AS A DOCTOR IN AN EMERGENCY.
I WOULD LIKE TO TEACH YOU HOW TO SUTURE SWORD WOUNDS...

HE NEVER TAUGHT ME ANYTHING EXCEPT HOW TO KILL PEOPLE, AS A NINJA.
MY FATHER WAS A DOCTOR, AS COVER FOR HIS REAL JOB.
BUT...
OH, THAT'S RIGHT! YAMAZAKI COMES FROM A MEDICAL FAMILY IN OSAKA!
HOW DID YOU KNOW, MATSUMOTO-SENSEI?

CHAPTER 15

SICKNESS



wriggle

wriggle

COOL IT, YOU IDIOT.

HAHAHA! I'M GLAD YOU'RE SO FULL OF ENERGY!

MY STOMACH DOESN'T HURT ANY MORE!

SYAHAHA!

squeeze

HE PROBABLY JUST ATE TOO MUCH A COUPLE OF DAYS AGO

MASTER. I DO NOT THINK HE IS SICK.

A "CHILD" OF 16!

(Yeah!)

WELL, I GUESS I SHOULD EXPECT THIS WHEN I EXAMINE A CHILD.

...

@YAHAHA!

COUGH! COO

THAT DOESN'T SOUND LIKE YOU AT ALL!

HEH HEH

YOU CALL HIM "MASTER"?!

AUGH! I'M GONNA DIE!

URGH...

STR

pat

pat

HMPFH

poke poke

UAGH...

CHATTER

CHATTER

HMM...

STOP! THAT TICKLES!!

BWSH

BWAHAHAHA! urk

TEE HEE HEE

...

HE'S BEEN UP LATE STUDYING, EVEN THOUGH I NEVER TOLD HIM TO. IT SHOULD PROBABLY ONLY TAKE A YEAR FOR HIM TO LEARN.

HE SEEMS TO BE A LOT MORE PASSIONATE ABOUT THIS THAN I EXPECTED.

bug

?

hmph

NO.

WHOA, YAMAZAKI, YOU'RE PASSIONATE?

CHIRP CHIRP

OKAY, NEXT!

...

GRIN

TO LEARN MEDICINE?

HOW LONG DOES IT TAKE...

MATSUMOTO-*SENSEI*!

.YOU CAN BE A DOCTOR IN THREE YEARS.

BUT IF YOU LEARN QUICKLY LIKE NANBU OVER THERE,

WELL, IT DEPENDS ON THE PERSON.

THE ONLY THING I'M TEACHING **YAMAZAKI** IS EMERGENCY TREATMENT THAT WILL BE USEFUL DURING BATTLE.

HA HA HA. YOU DON'T HAVE TO WORRY ABOUT THAT.

NO, I'LL BE BACK TWO OR THREE TIMES A WEEK.

BOO!

WHAAAT?

SUSUMU'S NOT COMING BACK FOR THREE YEARS?

AND I DON'T FEEL LIKE DOING ANYTHING.

I CAN'T FIND ANYTHING WRONG WITH YOU PHYSICALLY.

SO IT COULD BE PSYCHO-LOGICAL.

I FEEL REALLY TIRED, YOU KNOW?

ALL THE TIME.

...

...

DO YOU KNOW WHAT MIGHT HAVE CAUSED IT?

MANY OF THEM ARE MORE PSYCHO-LOGICALLY **HURT** THAN I THOUGHT

THIS IS BAD.

FWP FWP

FAST! 早

"EXTREMELY HEALTHY."

DAMN STRAIGHT! AND I AIN'T GONNA DIE IN NO **BED**, EITHER!

IF YOU TRIED COMMITTING *SEPPUKU* AND DIDN'T DIE, YOU'RE NOT GOING TO DIE ANY TIME SOON.

GRRR

BA-BAM!

GRAAAAARGH!

COME ON, SLICE ME OPEN! TAKE A GOOD **LONG** LOOK! KNOCK YOURSELF OUT!!

A LITTLE SCARED.

NEXT!

YOU SHOULD LEARN FROM THAT HARADA GUY.

THINKING TOO MUCH ISN'T GOOD FOR YOU.

I'VE HAD A LOT ON MY MIND.

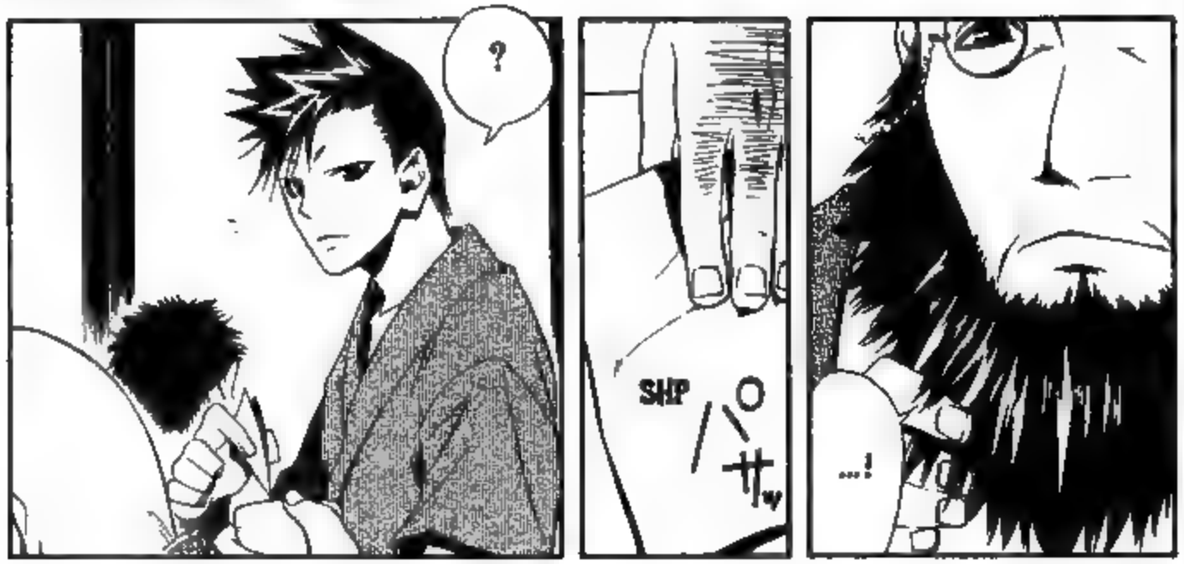
sigh はぁ

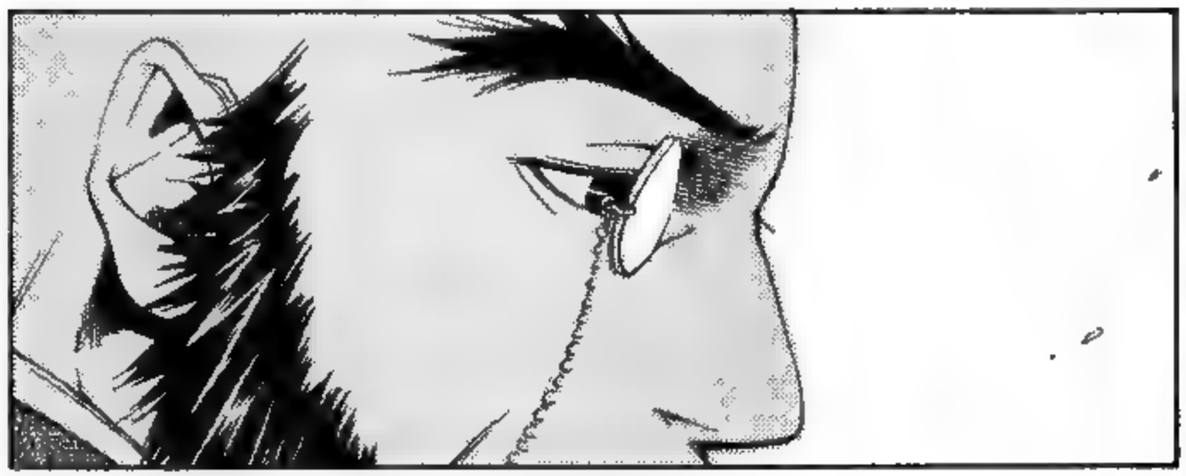
HA HA! IF YOU SAY SO!

UMM, I HAVEN'T BEEN SLEEPING WELL LATELY.

I JUST CAN'T GET TO SLEEP.

NEXT!


?
SHP
...!



LET ME KNOW HOW YOU FEEL AFTERWARDS.
OKAY.
I'D LIKE YOU TO TAKE A FEW MEDICINES.
WELL, I REALLY HOPE IT'S NOTHING MAJOR, BUT FOR NOW,

SQUEAL
SQUEAL

HMM...

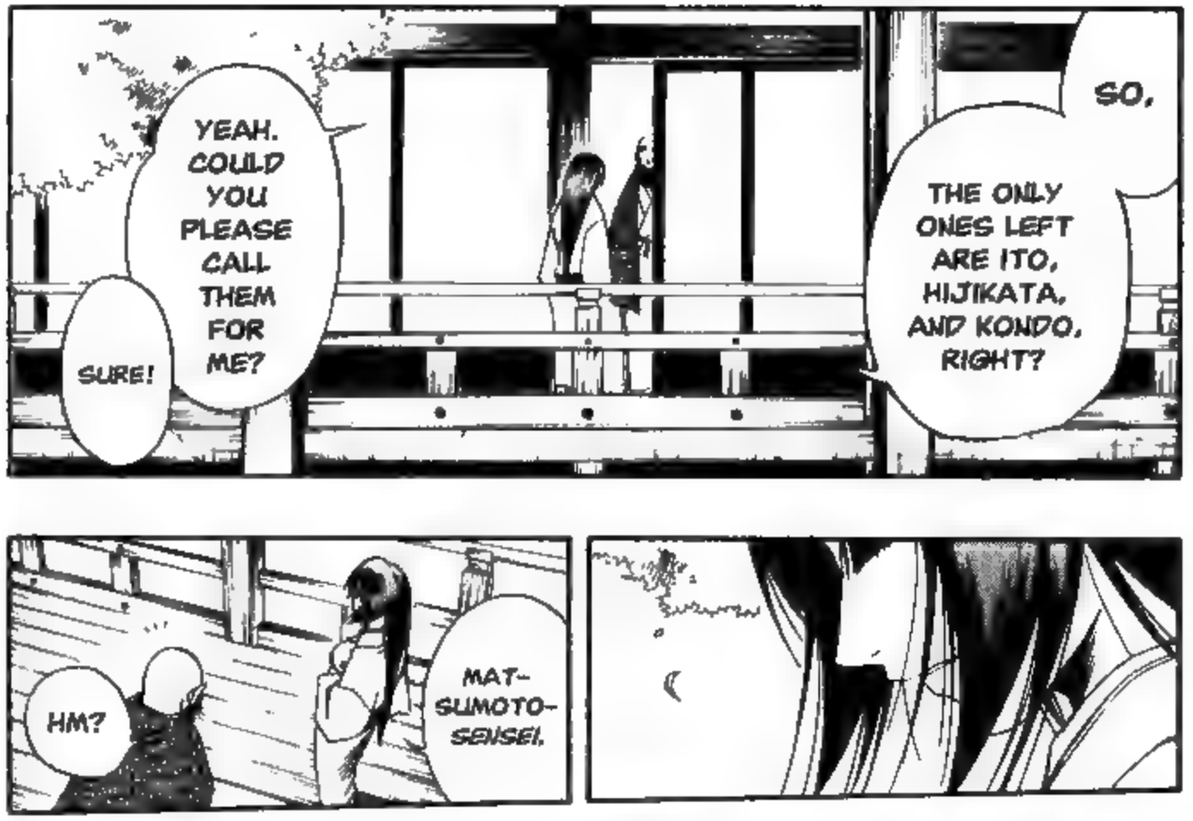
AAAH

I'M ALRIGHT NOW, BUT...
BUT ONLY ONCE IN A WHILE, WHEN MY COUGHING IS REALLY BAD.

YOU'RE COUGHING UP PHLEGM?
YES.

IT IS.
YEAH.
CLENCH
CHIRP CHIRP

cough
cough
cough


SURE!
YEAH. COULD YOU PLEASE CALL THEM FOR ME?
SO,
THE ONLY ONES LEFT ARE ITO, HIJIKATA, AND KONDO, RIGHT?
HM?
MAT-SUMOTO-SENSEI.

MUST BE A HARD JOB.
BEING A DOCTOR...

DON'T COME IN HERE!

DON'T OPEN THE DOOR!

COUGH

COUGH

COUGH

COUGH

HACK

COUGH

WELL THEN.

I THINK I'LL GO ON AHEAD SO I CAN PEEK IN ON YOUR EXAM!

HEY, SOJI.

fwip

AL-RIGHT...

AND KONDO WENT BEFORE YOU, SO YOU'LL BE THE LAST ONE.

ITO.

WHO'S THE DOCTOR SEEING NOW?

WHAT'S WRONG? IT'S NOTHING TO BE AFRAID OF!

NO, NOT THAT!

DID YOU...

COUGH JUST A MINUTE AGO?

SHWP

SLIDE

clatter

OH DEAR...

UH, HOW DO I PUT THIS?

heh heh

JUST GO AHEAD AND LAUGH AT ME.

THIS SORT OF THING TENDS TO HAPPEN

WHEN YOU FALL ASLEEP RESTING ON YOUR ELBOW!

HEH HEH HEH

tremble

tremble !!

WHOA

PSSHEH

UM, HIJIKATA? IT'S TIME FOR YOUR EXAMINATION.

ARE YOU ALRIGHT?

ZWOOOR

WHO ASKED THAT STINKIN' **QUACK** TO EXAMINE US ANYWAY?!

GRRRRR!!!

WHAT KIND OF A NUT IS THAT GUY?!

OH.

!

CREAK

THD

AS IF HAVING THAT **BEAR** PAWING AT ME WASN'T EMBARRASSING ENOUGH...

WHAT'S HE GONNA DO IF MY **BEAUTIFUL SKIN** BREAKS OUT IN A RASH?!

...

YOU MUSTVE BEEN DREAMING.

PSHK

NO.

DAMMIT

WHY **NOW**?

creak

WHY DID I HAVE TO HAVE THAT DREAM AGAIN NOW?

SLAM

HMPH

AND OUR NEWEST MEMBERS SEEM INTERESTED AS WELL.

I WONDER, WOULD YOU MIND TELLING US WHERE HIS GRAVE IS?

I WOULD **SO** LIKE TO VISIT HIS GRAVE...

WE DIDN'T EVEN HAVE THE CHANCE TO SAY GOODBYE BEFORE BEING SENT OUT TO RECRUIT.

AFTER HE COMMITTED *SEPPUKU*, HIS BODY WAS BURIED QUITE SUDDENLY.

SURE.

IT'S IN BACK OF KOEN TEMPLE.

CREAK

GOOD-BYE.

I'M SURE HE WOULD BE HAPPY TO SEE YOU...

ZWIP

ZWIP

ZWIP

FIDGET

I KNOW.

YOU'LL HAVE TO, TOO.

UH...

I, UM, HAD TO **STRIP** FOR THE EXAMI-NATION.

IT'S ABOUT YAMANAMI.

HALT

THP THP

OH DEAR! PLEASE WAIT A MOMENT, HIJIKATA-*DONO*.

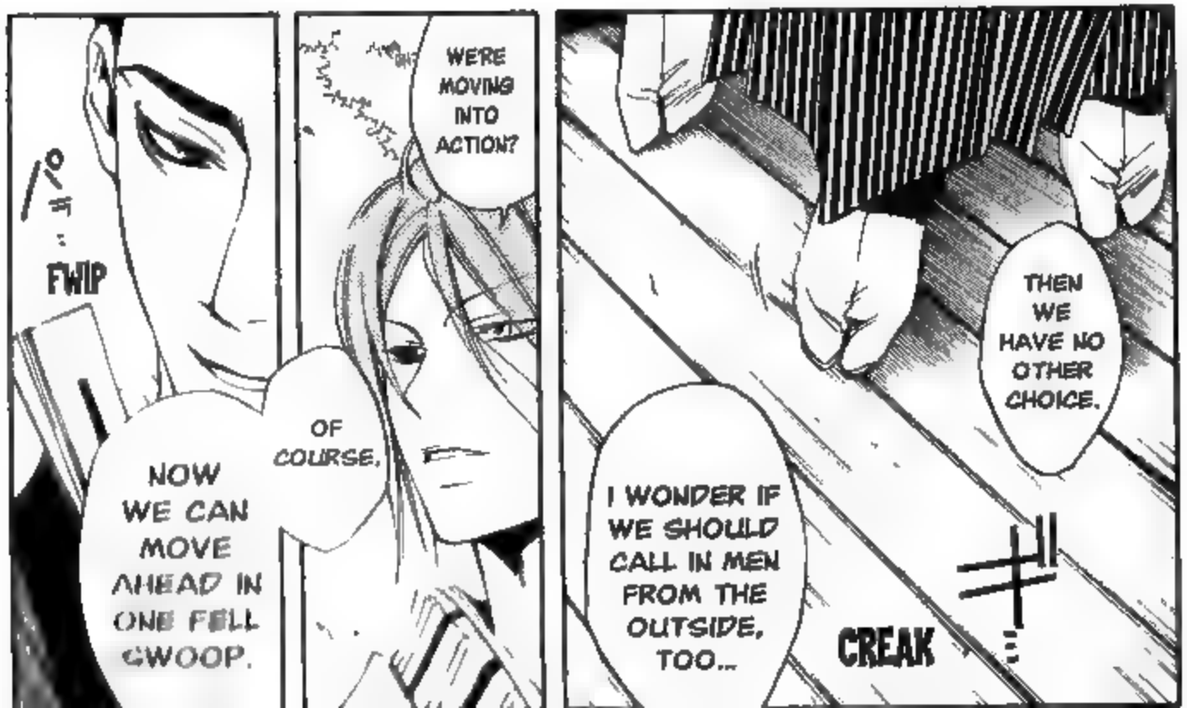
OUCH

WHAT?

...

BUT THERE AREN'T ENOUGH WITNESSES.
I KNOW IT WASN'T JUST A SIMPLE SEPPUKU.

NO.
BESIDES, HE'S ALREADY DECAYING BY NOW.
KOSUKE YAMANAMI
SHOULD WE DIG HIM OUT OF HIS GRAVE AND LOOK?


FWIP
OF COURSE.
WE'RE MOVING INTO ACTION?
NOW WE CAN MOVE AHEAD IN ONE FELL SWOOP.
THEN WE HAVE NO OTHER CHOICE.
I WONDER IF WE SHOULD CALL IN MEN FROM THE OUTSIDE, TOO...
CREAK

CHUCKLE
HOW CUTE.
HE WAS BLUSHING.
HEH HEH.

IT SEEMS THEY CAN'T TELL US WHAT REALLY HAPPENED. PERHAPS IT'S SOMETHING SO BIG...
SCUFF
I WONDER WHAT THE TRUTH IS BEHIND YAMANAMI'S DEATH.

SCUFF
IT COULD DESTROY THE SHINSENGUMI!

THE TRUTH IS, ITO WANTS TO DO IT FOR KICKS!

JUST IMAGINING IT SENDS CHILLS UP MY SPINE!

shiver

OH, THE ECSTASY OF TAMING A WILD BEAST!

WE'LL GRAB HIM BY THE BALLS AND TIGHTEN OUR GRIP ON HIM LITTLE BY LITTLE!

AS ITO IMAGINES IT

I WONDER HOW FAR HE'LL GET BEFORE I CATCH HIM...

heh
heh
heh

NOW THEN.

DA-DUM

AMUSE ME...

楽しませてもらおうじゃないの

IT IS **CRITICAL** THAT WE BRING THE SHINSENGUMI TOGETHER UNDER THIS PRINCIPLE, THROUGH THE IDEALS OF UNITY AND OF A JAPANESE NATION CUT OFF TO FOREIGNERS.

BOTH KONDO AND HIJIKATA SHARE OUR POSITION ON "REVERING THE EMPEROR."

TO ACHIEVE THAT, FIRST WE MUST...

THEY COULD BE THE GREATEST IMPERIALIST SOLDIERS EVER.

THEY'RE NOT EXACTLY THE **SMARTEST** LOT, BUT IF WE HANDLE THEM WELL,

heh
heh
heh
heh

USING PERSUASION SO HE'D COME ALONG QUIETLY JUST WOULDN'T BE **EXCITING**.

SILLY BOY.

BUT HOW ARE YOU GOING TO PERSUADE HIM?

TAKE DOWN TOSHIZO HIJIKATA, THE **REAL** LEADER OF THE SHINSENGUMI!

ALL WE NEED IS **HIM** IN OUR GRASP, AND WE'LL HAVE THE ENTIRE SHINSENGUMI!

AS ITO IMAGINES HIM

UNFORTUN-
ATELY.

WELL...

YEAH.

thp

WAUGH!

thwump

...

silence

...

up

EVERY-
THING
WE
JUST
SAID?

YOU
HEARD

IN OTHER
WORDS...

SLIDE

SINCE
THE BE-
GINNING.

WHAAT?!
HOW LONG
HAVE **YOU**
BEEN
THERE,
HAJIME?

I'M ON YOUR SIDE.

SQUEAL

SQUEAL

SQUEAL

CHIRP

BAM!

PLEASE MAKE SURE YOUR NEW RECRUITS LEARN THIS WELL.

"ENGAGING IN PRIVATE FIGHTS IS NOT PERMITTED."

gulp

ITO-SENSEI!

BUT...

SHWP

DON'T MISUNDER-STAND ME.

AFTER ALL, I'M ONLY ONE MAN.

I'VE PRACTICED MEDICINE FOR 26 YEARS, BUT SOMETIMES I CAN'T SAVE SOMEONE FROM DYING. THAT'S THE HARDEST THING TO TAKE.

I DIDN'T MEAN...

TO BRING UP SOMETHING SO DIFFICULT FOR YOU.

EVEN IF I DO THIS MY WHOLE LIFE, I CAN ONLY SAVE A HANDFUL OF PEOPLE. I KNOW THIS, BUT STILL, I...

I'M SORRY.

I GIVE UP.

SCUFF

SCUFF

YEAH.

YOU SEEM TO BE FEELING WELL.

WITH THE EXAMINATIONS, MATSUMOTO-SENSEI?

YOU'RE FINISHED...

SENSEI?

YES?

chirp chirp

YEAH.

THAT IT IS.

BEING A DOCTOR...

REALLY IS HARD, ISN'T IT?

...

SEE YOU LATER!

BYE! ♡

...

SKSH

AND EVEN IF YOU DID KNOW...

IT'S NOT SOME-THING THAT SHOULD GET OUT.

DA-DUM

I'M NOT STRONG AT ALL!

NO, I'M NOT!

TWITCH

SHWIP

YOU JUST DON'T KNOW, IS ALL!

YOU JUST...

SMILE

WHAT DON'T I KNOW?

NO, WAIT!

I'LL BE HEADING BACK NOW. IT'S ALMOST TIME FOR ME TO GO ON PATROL...

LA-DEE-DA

AL-RIGHTY THEN!

IT ENTERS THE LUNGS AND SPREADS THROUGH THE RESPIRATORY ORGANS, CAUSING THE PATIENT TO COUGH.

THE COUGHING IS ACCOMPANIED BY BLOODY PHLEGM.

ONCE THE PATIENT STARTS COUGHING UP ACTUAL BLOOD, HE ONLY HAS A YEAR OR SO LEFT.

AND IT'S **INCURABLE**.

IT KILLS BOTH OLD AND YOUNG.

WE STILL HAVEN'T FOUND A TREATMENT.

ALSO, NANBU-*DONO* HAS WRITTEN UP THE RECORDS ON SHIMATANI-*DONO*.

YA-MAZAKI...

THERE'S SOMETHING I NEED TO TELL YOU. SOMETHING **SECRET**.

MASTER.

I'VE FINISHED CLEANING THE EXAMINATION ROOM.

I WANT TO STOP THIS FROM **SPREADING**, BUT WITHOUT ANYONE BEING THE WISER.

THE PATIENT IN QUESTION ALREADY KNOWS.

WHAT IS IT, SIR?

I'M TALKING ABOUT A CERTAIN **DISEASE**.

IS HE TALKING ABOUT SOMETHING CONTAGIOUS?

"SPREADING"?

The End

PEACEMAKER 续3 終

☆ HELLO! CHRONO HERE. I'M HONORED THAT YOU BOUGHT THIS BOOK, DESPITE THE COVER BEING DEPRESSING AGAIN. THE STORY INSIDE IS... WELL, JUST LIKE IT ALWAYS IS (IN OTHER WORDS, DEPRESSING).

☆ RIGHT NOW AS I'M WRITING THIS, IT'S IN THE MIDDLE OF THE RAINY SEASON. IT'S **SO** HARD TO WAKE UP, AND I'VE BEEN BUMMED OUT, TOO! MAYBE THAT'S WHY I'VE BEEN IN KIND OF A SLUMP LATELY. WRITING THE STORY AND DOING THE DRAFTS EAT UP ALL MY TIME... SO ANYWAY, AS A PART OF MY "REHABILITATION," I DREW THE PICTURE ON THE LEFT. IF THERE'S SKIN SHOWING, THAT MAKES IT EASIER TO DRAW! (NAH, I'M JUST LEWD.) AAH, I SHOULDN'T BE SO DOWN WHEN I'M SO BUSY! I'LL TRY MY BEST SO AT LEAST I WON'T GET ANY **MORE** DEPRESSED.

COS-PLAYING AS A BOXER? KINDA RANDOM, HUH?

☆ MY APOLOGIES FOR THE BORING DEVELOPMENTS IN THE STORY. THEY'RE ALL JUST EVENTS THAT I **HAVE** TO WRITE, NO MATTER WHAT. I DO HOPE YOU STAY ALONG FOR THE RIDE, THOUGH... sniff

SOMETIMES I REALLY WANT TO DRAW TETSU'S **CURVES**, BUT I CAN'T BECAUSE HE USUALLY WEARS SUCH LOOSE CLOTHES. THAT'S WHY I DREW THE PICTURE OF HIM ON THE LEFT. I MADE IT TOO BIG, THOUGH...

☆ OH NO! THIS IS GETTING DEPRESSING AGAIN! OKAY, FROM HERE ON, I'LL ONLY TALK ABOUT POSITIVE THINGS. ACTUALLY, YOURS TRULY JUST GOT A NEW APARTMENT/OFFICE! YAY! IT LOOKS LIKE I FINALLY HAVE A **REAL** MANGA AUTHOR'S OFFICE! (I HAVEN'T ACTUALLY MOVED IN YET, THOUGH.) SO NOW, IT'S GOODBYE AND FAREWELL TO MY ROOM IN MY PARENT'S HOUSE, WHICH I'VE BEEN USING AS MY OFFICE. BEFORE I GO, I'LL SHOW YOU MY OLD OFFICE WHERE I'VE BEEN DRAWING *PEACEMAKER* UP UNTIL NOW. IT'S VERY **CRAMPED AND DIRTY**. THERE'S NOTHING REALLY FEMININE IN IT AT ALL. OH WELL. IT'S A **CRAZED FAN'S ROOM**. BLEH! (GOT A PROBLEM WITH THAT?)

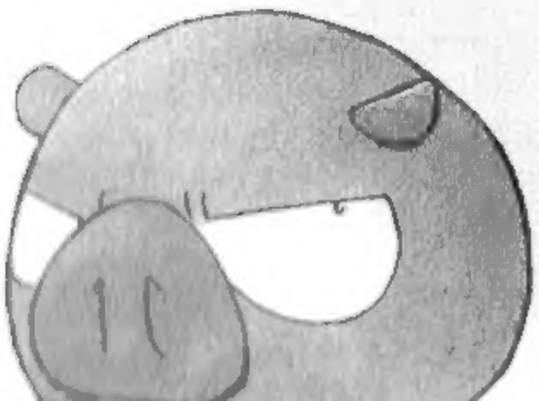
I'LL SHOW YOU MY NEW OFFICE WHEN I CAN, SO PLEASE BE PATIENT. IT'LL BE SO COOL TO JUST BANG OUT WORK (ZIP ZIP!) IN A NICE, CLEAN OFFICE! I'LL DEFINITELY TRY MY HARDEST. WELL THEN, THAT'S ALL FOR NOW! ☆

CHRONO'S OLD OFFICE

JUST LIKE YOU SEE. IT'S PACKED, AND I DON'T CLEAN IT. IT'S A REAL PAIN FOR MY ASSISTANTS TO WORK IN SUCH A CROWDED SPACE WHEN THEY COME TO HELP ME EVERY MONTH. I'M SORRY! AND THANKS!

NOW I GOT A NEW ASSISTANT. IT'S EVEN MORE CROWDED.

THIS IS CLOSER TO THE REAL SIZE



SORRY THE BONUS PAGES ARE SO ROUGH AGAIN (THOUGH THEY'RE BETTER THAN BEFORE).

burp

THANKS FOR BUYING VOLUME 3! AND EVEN IF YOU DIDN'T ACTUALLY **BUY** IT, THANKS FOR READING ANYWAY!

HURRY, WE'RE GETTING CLOSE TO THE DEADLINE.

SHE'S **THIN**!

Stress is making me get fat!

I ACTUALLY GAVE THE DESIGN SOME THOUGHT. IT'S A CROSS BETWEEN THE OLD AND NEW-STYLE SEWS!

THEN I RAN OUT OF TIME, SO I JUST GAVE UP.

bah!

NO

I Don't care much about SWORD design though, do you?

BUT I LOST MY REFERENCE PAGES!

ACTUALLY, I WANTED TO WRITE ABOUT THE DESIGN OF RYOMA'S PISTOL (A SMITH & WESSON).

Saya

(I WILL SOME DAY, THOUGH.) SINCE I HAVE NO TALENT, I'LL JUST DRAW AN ILLUSTRATION! HOW LAME!

I DON'T WANNA DO SOME IDIOTIC, CUTE LITTLE CHAT AGAIN!

Nooo

ONCE I GAVE UP ON THAT TOPIC, I HAD NOTHING ELSE TO TALK ABOUT!

- I HAVEN'T DRAWN HER IN A WHILE. THE BIG PROBLEM IS THAT THERE *IS* NO PROBLEM IF SHE DOESN'T SHOW UP VERY MUCH. SHE'S SUPPOSED TO BE A HEROINE. I'LL HAVE TO DO SOMETHING ABOUT THAT...THANK GOD, I'VE USED UP ALL THE SPACE! SEE YOU NEXT TIME!

NOT VERY CUTE...

TRANSLATOR'S NOTES

Peacemaker Kurogane Vol. 03

PG. 6

(a) Seppuku Often translated as "ritual suicide," this is performed by cutting one's stomach with a small dagger. Another person (the "second") then beheads this person to keep them from suffering for too long. *Seppuku* was also the punishment for violating any of the Shinsengumi codes.

(b) The evening of February 23rd Specifically, February 23rd, 1865 by the old Japanese calendar. The Japanese used to employ a lunar calendar for the months and a solar calendar for the years, which meant that months didn't exactly match up with the Western calendar. Furthermore, a 13th month was occasionally inserted to get the solar and lunar calendars back in sync. (FYI, February 23, 1865 corresponds to March 20 on the modern calendar).

PG. 22

Floating world The "floating world" (in Japanese, *ukiyo*) is used to refer to the pleasure districts in old Japan. The term has its origins in Buddhist philosophy, which teaches that life and all its pleasures are fleeting, and thus sad, but you must detach yourself from this to reach enlightenment. In the pleasure districts, however, this philosophy was essentially turned on its head—if life is transient, then you might as well enjoy it to the fullest.

PG. 47

The Pinky The upraised pinky here is the sign for "girlfriend."

PG. 63

Shimabara This area is the red-light district of Kyoto.

PG. 66

(a) The Ikeda Inn The infamous Ikeda Inn Incident spread the name (and fame) of the Shinsengumi throughout Japan. On June 5th, 1864, revolutionaries planned to set all of Kyoto aflame and assassinate important members of the shogunate amidst the chaos. News of this reached the Shinsengumi, and when they discovered that the revolutionaries were holding an important meeting at the Ikeda Inn, they raided the Inn and killed or arrested most of the would-be culprits. Thanks to this incident, the extremists were able to overpower moderates in the Choshu fief and raise an army in retaliation.

(b) Death of a *sensei* Tetsu fought Suzu's sensei, Ishida, at the Ikeda Inn incident. Despite Suzu's belief to the contrary, however, Tetsu did not actually kill him—Okita stepped in and beheaded Ishida so that Tetsu would not have to stain his hands with the man's blood.

PG. 90

Mimawarigumi This is the name of another group of swordsmen who, like the Shinsengumi, patrolled the streets of Kyoto. The Mimawarigumi were under the patronage of the Shogunate, however, while the Shinsengumi were under the Military Commissioner of Kyoto. The two groups patrolled different areas.

PG. 105

(1) Dejima in Nagasaki Dejima is an artificial island in the port of Nagasaki, built to house Japan's Portuguese residents. During the *sakoku* period of isolationism, the shogunate ordered that the Portuguese should be separated from the general Japanese public. When the Portuguese were later expelled outright, the Dutch were forced to move their trading post to Dejima, which became Japan's only window to the outside world.

(2) Takasugi This is a reference to Shinsaku Takasugi, a military leader of Choshu and a comrade of Ryoma Sakamoto. Takasugi really did give Sakamoto a gun as a souvenir from Shanghai. A gun of the same model can be seen in the Ryoma Sakamoto Memorial Museum in Japan.

PG. 127

"Shouldn't a bear have a SALMON, and not a boar?" The image of a bear clutching a salmon in its mouth is a familiar one, and often depicted in carved wooden ornaments decorating entranceways and/or living rooms in Japan.

PG. 164

"Engaging in private fights is not permitted" This is the 5th article of the Code of the Shinsengumi. Violating any of these codes was punishable by death.

Notes On Titles Used...

Dono A term of respect that can be used between people (mostly samurai) of same or similar ranks. It's not used as much today as it was during the time period of *Peacemaker Kurogane*. In modern days, actually *dono* is less formal than *sama* and mostly used in written forms, such as letters, public notice, etc.

Sama Another term of respect. This is still in common use in modern times, and is sometimes translated as "Master" or "Lady."

Sensei Teacher, instructor, or master. This is used for teachers in any field (not just the martial arts), as well as for doctors. It may also be used as a term of respect for someone who isn't necessarily a teacher, but who has gained some level of

PEACEMAKER KUROGANE VOLUME 3

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